

# THE STUDENT WORLD

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## Prayer

To say that prayer unites is so commonplace it is taken for granted, but to experience that prayer divides is unexpected suffering. The sudden harsh realization that prayers of sincere Christians from one part of the world may divide them from Christians in another part is bewildering but not rare in a world like ours. Such occasions, which come about when the world situation tightens, as in recent months, but also when it relaxes and we are again in contact with Christian brethren from whom we have been cut off, reveal to us the pitfalls of prayer, and show us more clearly than ever that "we do not know how to pray as we ought". The very realities of the day, then, are pressing upon us, forcing us to learn that "Christian prayer is not an attempt to use God for our purpose but a petition that will He use us for His".

But world crisis cannot be used as the excuse for all new emphases that find expression in the WSCF, and this issue of *The Student World* on prayer does not lay claim to timeliness simply because world conditions have once again led us to prayer. The demands of students around the world for elementary training in the practice of prayer are constantly recurring. It is true that there seem to be times when the subject of prayer receives more than the usual amount of attention, and times when it is simply assumed that prayer life is central without much articulation about it. To find the last article on prayer in *The Student World*, for instance, one must go back to the fourth quarter 1947. The last full issue devoted to this area was called "The Inner Life", and appeared just at the close of the war in 1945.

However, evidence has come from varied sources that students today are asking more than the usual questions about prayer. At Study Swanwick in Great Britain last summer, the seminar on "Learning How to Pray" had to turn people away. Many of the questions in the General Committee discussion on holy living were about prayer and personal devotional life, for instance, can we validly expect to return to the tradition of the "Morning Watch"? In January, at the European Council, a discussion which began with the place of university missions in our evangelistic task led eventually to the question, how do we instruct students in prayer? The recent production in several countries of SCM prayer books, and the plan to revise *Venite Adoremus II*, the Federation book of prayers and informal worship services, so that it can be used by students in their private prayer life, are further examples of the response that SCM leaders are making to these requests from students.

The best school of prayer continues to be prayer itself, and it seems to me that in this the Federation has been growing, or, at any rate, some of us have been growing through the Federation in our appreciation of the place of intercessory prayer. It was early in 1955 at the Officers' meeting that the decision was made to begin publishing a prayer calendar, including special events in national Movements and the WSCF and the travels of Federation staff. The form of the calendar has been subject to change over these two years of experimentation, and it cannot be said that we have yet found the best way to help our members to pray in an intelligent way for one another. But there is no doubt that the prayer calendar has served as a reminder and as a visible token that all our work can be done only in dependence on the faithfulness of one another in prayer, and ultimately in our mutual dependence on the faithfulness of God. The letter received from one of our member Movements in December 1956, calling us to continue in intercession for one another, surely echoed the voice of Movements around the world.

Something else we have learned about prayer in the Federation headquarters itself, is that the discipline of orderly intercession for Movements around the world lifts our work to a vantage point from which we can see the forest, where before



we saw only the trees. The way in which a disciplined order of intercession multiplies the occasions when prayer can be related to current problems that would otherwise not be prayed about, is testimony against the casual and haphazard way in which we often allow our prayer lives to disintegrate. In this same way, the discipline of the great prayers of the Church Year call us, together with the whole Church, into paths of obedience which our own imagination might never discover. The strength received from the Christian community as it upholds us in prayer and helps us to grow in prayer cannot, however, be an excuse for neglecting our personal life of prayer. Rather, the two are reciprocal, nourished by and nourishing one another.

One section of the Call to Prayer for 1955 has remained vividly in my mind :

In addressing to you this Call to Prayer, we are also convinced that we are inviting you to receive from God great spiritual riches. As Officers of the World's Student Christian Federation, we have experienced over and over again, and particularly in our conferences and meetings, that when we gather together to present to God our intercessions for others, we are suddenly overwhelmed by a sense of fulfilment, of completion. We have understood that God wills that His children, who have come out of many races, nations and confessions, be one in Him in worship, in prayer for one another and for all others, in common action which speaks the language of love in His service. In prayer we have received, and everyone can receive, a foretaste of the future, the momentary but overwhelming realization of our oneness in Jesus Christ, when we all turn to Him in prayer. Such an experience cannot ultimately be explained ; some experiences are better left unexplained and just received with gratitude for God's goodness. But we feel compelled to share with you what we know, however inadequate it is, when we ask you to share in prayer for all students around the world.

In this spirit we also share with you this issue of *The Student World* on prayer. Although in a very human sense we shall no doubt continue to suffer in our inability to pray and the realization that in our praying we recognize or even give rise to our dividedness from our brothers, surely in the deepest sense this helplessness and division are also overcome in Him in whose name our prayers are offered.

ALICE OTTERNESS.

# The Bible as the Source of Private Prayer

MAX-ALAIN CHEVALLIER

## *The pitfalls : subjectivity and images*

Some people are naturally religious by temperament and others are not much attracted to religion. This is a fact observed in psychology, character study, and sociology. There is nothing here to disturb faith, for faith has no common dimension with natural religiosity. Religiosity is a natural disposition, like emotionalism for example. It is a subjective quality. Faith is first an encounter, then a relationship with a living God through His Son, Jesus Christ ; it is an objective attitude, determined by the appearance of a Person who speaks to us — God.

Of course, the relationship with Jesus Christ through faith may be accompanied by a certain religious feeling, but it is not necessarily so. And it is not certain that it is an advantage for a follower of Christ to be naturally religious. Religiousness has been a pitfall for a number of Christians : it leads them to attach more importance to subjective feelings than to the one thing that matters : the company of Jesus.

Prayer is nothing else than the conversation in varied forms which happens between God and ourselves in the objective, living, day-to-day relationship of faith. The source of prayer is not in our own hearts, nor in the relation of our hearts to Christ. If this man complains that he finds no disposition to pray within himself, he is as much in error as that other, who pours out his effusions without leaving time for Christ to put in a single word. Both give to their own feelings an importance which is not legitimate.

This leads us to say that it is almost essential that prayer should begin with the contemplation of God in Jesus Christ, who establishes with us a relationship of mercy. However brief the moment in which we remember that God enters our hearts, it is probably enough to exorcise the demon of subjectivism, to break the tight shell of our hearts, whether they be naturally



dry or naturally pious, and to set us in the right attitude in the presence of the living God.

This time of contemplation must not, however, be too brief. There is, in fact, another obstacle besides subjectivism, and that is idolatry. After saying to Moses, "Thou shalt have none other gods before me", the God of Sinai says explicitly, "Thou shalt not make for thyself any graven images... to worship them". And the story of the golden calf which follows shows that one may indeed believe in the true God but still represent Him falsely; contrary to general belief, the golden calf was not merely any idol; it was an attempt to represent the living and true God who had brought the people out of Egypt (Ex. 32 : 4-5). It is to be feared that we also often disobey this commandment forbidding images. When in public worship we hear the words, "Let us pray", or when we kneel down in our own room for private prayer, with the full intention of worshipping the Lord and Him alone, even if we get past our own feelings to enter into His presence, do we not still represent Him to ourselves according to our own limited judgment, and not as He is in His mysterious liberty? One sees a picture of a fearsome divinity, another an indulgent grandfather. Or else, more subtly, we "imagine" the God of our own theology — or lack of theology. We congeal this or that aspect of the Lordship of Jesus, king, prophet or priest, or, in short, a system of ethics, a doctrine, or a rite, and the living person is hidden by the image that we make. Moreover, our individual imagination is not alone concerned. We may even say that our diverse ecclesiastical traditions all suggest to us an image of God at the same time as the worship of God Himself. How could it be otherwise when an education and a human form of worship intervene? It is inevitable.

We must somehow find a way of getting beyond the images when we enter into the marvellous presence of the living God.

### *The Bible, the source of true prayer*

The Bible, whether read in our private devotions or heard in the course of public worship, is the source of a faith which takes hold of our hearts, be they religious or dry, and of a

kind of prayer which passes beyond misleading images to meet the living God.

Provided we do not always choose the same passages — and for this reason the texts, however varied, chosen from any fixed form of service, are not enough — the Bible brings ever anew before us the person of the living God, inviting us to union with Himself. The Bible brings to our hearts its objectivity and to our imagination its diversity and mystery. The Bible bears its witness to us, gets us out of our usual rut, and leaves us face to face with God.

Let us note three factors in this salutary function of the Bible.

1. In the Bible, *God speaks*. It is not our business here to write an exposition on the Bible as the Word of God. But we shall underline the point that very often, perhaps most often, God does not speak in the Bible in the way we should expect. If only because on a day when we should like to read a message of consolation we read an exhortation, and when we are joyful we read a psalm written in affliction. And also because the Old Testament, or the Epistles to the Corinthians, upset our moralizings, the Sermon on the Mount our smugness, or the Apocalypse our ideal of the Church, etc. But above all, because the Cross and the Resurrection are not an easy message to hear and receive.

No! We are in no danger of integrating the Word of the living God in the Bible into our *Weltanschauung*, nor of neutralizing it: either we lay the book aside, or else we are gripped by this "strangeness" of God, and obliged to take part in the dialogue with Him: this is prayer.

2. The Bible shows us a view of *history led by God*. Where could the living personality of God appear better than in this history? God leads humanity to salvation through the maze of political events and the tangle of the wills and caprices of men and demons. If we are to see this, of course, the Bible must not be read in small fragments. But if we stand back a little, the plan of God appears in all its majesty, in all its majestic authority, as well as in the patience and perseverance



which manifest His love. How overwhelming an experience is the reading of Psalm 136, Hosea, and the parable of the labourers in the vineyard in this perspective! We feel that we also are inserted in this history of salvation, and we are bound to love and admire the living God who leads our personal history, as He did these ancient histories, into the web of the immense history of salvation which is now running towards its end.

The Bible gives a meaning, that is, a direction and a significance, to each one of my days, because it reveals to me the presence of a God who acts in His love, for me, for others, and for His creation. In other words, God reveals Himself not as an idea, nor as a doctrine, nor even as a distant Saviour, but as a partner of my life and of the history of the world. And how surely this sets faith and prayer on the right path.

3. Finally and chiefly, the Bible brings before me *the person of Jesus Christ*. From the witness of prophets, evangelists, and apostles comes the only legitimate "image" of God: His Son who declares to us, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14: 9; Col. 1: 15; cf. John 1: 18, 12: 45; Col. 2: 9). No catechism, no liturgy, no book of devotion, however useful they may be, can replace the Bible for speaking to us about Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord. We need all the abundance, all the variety, and even all the little contradictions of these witnesses, if the stature of Christ is to appear in full relief in all its independence, in all its life. For these reasons also the Bible is indispensable to prayer, because the Bible alone leads truly to Jesus Christ.

### *Practical conclusions*

These thoughts, with many others, have led to the working out of a little booklet, which the French SCM some years ago produced for its members, to help them in their spiritual life<sup>1</sup>. There are probably other ways of putting these observations into practice, but we shall let this one example suffice.

<sup>1</sup> *Semaine* has been made available in German by the Swiss SCM, and in English by the New Zealand SCM.

Prayer, whether private or corporate, begins with a moment of contemplation. This contemplation is "fixed" by the reading of some verses from the Bible which remind us who is the living God who is always first at the place of meeting; these verses are sometimes part of a psalm or a hymn of adoration, sometimes a text where God (or Jesus) Himself speaks to men, sometimes the proclamation of some primary truth. In order to prevent one forgetting the varied aspects of the mystery of God, the theme of contemplation is different every day of the week: Monday — God the Creator; Tuesday — the Holy Spirit; Wednesday — Jesus, the Man living among men; Thursday — Christ giving Himself to us in the Last Supper; Friday — Christ on the Cross; Saturday — Christ "dead" and awaited; Sunday — Christ the Victor.

Here, for example, are some of the verses suggested to fix our contemplation on Wednesday:

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden...  
(Luke 1: 46-55.)

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men...

(Phil. 2: 5-11.)

For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(Heb. 4: 15-16.)

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

(I Tim. 2: 5.)

It is clear that everyone can make for himself an almost unlimited choice of texts for contemplation. We suggest sometimes transposing certain texts into the second person to show



adoration, for example, to read Philippians 2 : 5 as "Thou who wast in the form of God, didst not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but didst empty thyself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men".

Thus our prayer is not influenced by the good or bad, temporary or chronic dispositions of our hearts, still less by our peculiar and often inadequate image of God, but by the marvellous richness of the person and work of the living God. It is not, of course, an infallible system ! It is only a discipline which tries to reserve for God the place which belongs to Him : the first place. The Bible is thus the most immediate source of our prayer.

This immediate source would be in danger of drying up if we did not read the Bible at the same time and hear its message in its amplitude. The few verses which we read to fix our eyes upon the God who loves us should themselves be indefinitely renewed in their substance by what we read elsewhere.

The reading and study of the Bible not only give background to our meeting with God, but also give infinite nourishment and variety to our prayer. St. Augustine said, "May I know again in prayer what I discover in thy holy books".

The Holy Spirit alone can make real what has just been said : that the Bible and prayer are a meeting with God.

# Prayer for the World

GERHARD BASSARAK

## *The world for which we pray*

The world for which we pray is not the cosmos of stars and the infinite universe, not the realm of flora and fauna, nor the globe of stones and tides. The world for which we pray is mankind created by God and estranged from Him. It is not the world which confronts us, but the world in which we live, on which God has pronounced His curse, and which the prince of this world strives to make his kingdom; the world which God loves and into which He has sent His Son to bear its sin; the world which Jesus Christ has reconciled to His Father; the world which moves towards its end in order that death and fulfilment, God's judgment and salvation, may all be one. It is the world whose prince has been defeated by our Lord; the world into which He sends us, His Church, just as He Himself was sent by the Father, to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. The world for which we pray is the world of humanity and of inhumanity, the world of permanent war, of never-achieved peace, and of politics. The world for which we pray is the world of trade and economics, of pleasure and relaxation, of joy and sorrow, of the noble spirit and of degeneracy, of beauty and misery, of piety and insolent pride, the world of parents and children, of peoples and nations, of churches and religions. It is the world in which there is:

... a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones  
together;



a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing ;  
 a time to seek, and a time to lose ;  
 a time to keep, and a time to cast away ;  
 a time to rend, and a time to sew ;  
 a time to keep silence, and a time to speak ;  
 a time to love, and a time to hate ;  
 a time for war, and a time for peace.

(Ecc. 3 : 2-8.)

The manifold world of man, yesterday old, today new, and tomorrow full of the unexpected — this is the world which is in need of our prayer, of being present in our prayer, of being given a task in our prayer.

Do we know how and what to pray for the world ?

*“In the name of Christ”*

This world lives by the prayer of the Christian community, although it neither knows this nor cares. Should we dare to say so, we should be met by cold disdain. Even many of us who are Christians do not know or take seriously enough this fact that the world lives by our prayer. This would be a better world, were we to recognize this fact and act accordingly. Through prayer Christ makes His Church participate in His dominion over the world. The biblical description of the path which Christ Himself followed and of His exalted position resembles that which is given of His Church :

God has raised Christ from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come ; and he has put all things under his feet...

(Eph. 1 : 20-21.)

God has raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

(Eph. 2 : 6.)

“In the name of Christ” we pray for the world according to Christ’s commandment. “In the name of” means as His representative, on His behalf, with His mouth, fulfilling His mandate ; it means that our prayer before God’s throne becomes

Christ's prayer ; it means that Jesus Christ will pray our prayer as His own into the ear of the Father. The fact that we are allowed to pray "in the name of Christ" binds us really to do so. The fact that we are allowed to pray "in the name of Christ" calls us to consider whether we can expect Jesus Christ to receive childish and rash requests ; whether we can expect our Lord to make our requests His requests ; whether we dare ask for the authority of the Son before the Father for a meaningless, immature petition.

Do we know how and what to pray for the world in the name of Christ ?

### *Prayer is the work of the Spirit*

What we are to pray for the world, and how we are to pray — this we do not know (Rom. 8 : 26). This is our predicament, and our weakness. The advantage of a Christian over a non-Christian does not lie in the knowledge of how to pray. The opposite is true ; the non-Christian, the pious heathen, and the devout Jew know their prayers. The disciples of the Lord knew their prayers, as did the followers of John — as long as they had not really met Jesus. The experience of the praying Lord shows them that their prayers are inadequate ; but they cannot simply adopt the prayer of Jesus. The twelve disciples experience what Paul also comes to know : that prayer has ceased to be a human possibility. Prayer as a rebellious act, a pious practice, a sacramental sacrifice, a liturgical formula and rite, has come to an end. The rebellious prayer, the prayer of man eager to justify himself before God, is no way out of the impasse in which man finds himself before God. Prayer is the work of the Holy Spirit — this is the urgent message to all those who are still groping in the dark, who still believe in the possibilities of their own piety. God does not allow Himself to be usurped in prayer. All the disciples can do is to ask the Lord, "Teach us to pray" (Luke 11 : 1). They receive an answer which again resembles that given to Paul : "The heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" (Luke 11 : 13). "The Spirit helps us in our weakness... The Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for



words" (Rom. 8 : 26). Again, our weakness is no occasional or special indisposition, no physical fatigue, no mental exhaustion. It is no passing lack of the Holy Spirit. Our weakness, which finds its expression in our inability to know how to pray as Christians, to find the right word, to have access to it, is due to our godlessness, our pride, our sin.

Desperation is no way out. If our eyes were fixed solely on ourselves, desperation would be all that is left to us. But, thank God, the knowledge of our inability to pray is preceded by the knowledge of the work of the Spirit. The Spirit helps us in our weakness. Now our weakness is not the last word, making us sorrowful unto death, for in our weakness we are comforted. We believe in the Spirit who is present and helping us to pray. We can also get a realistic view of our weakness : we see that it is impossible for us to know how to pray, but we also see that this our weakness has been pardoned because now it is the Spirit praying in us. The Spirit prays just as Christ has taught His disciples to pray : the sighs of the Spirit are Abba, Father — Our Father.

### *Prayer is God speaking to God*

There are some things we must keep constantly in mind : the promise, the joy, the gladness, and happiness of prayer, and the fact that we are to pray ; the fact that prayer is far from being a private affair ; that prayer mocks any kind of selfishness ; that prayer overthrows any presumption that we know how to pray.

Wherever Christians pray, they never do so to follow a pious practice, nor to obey a commandment, nor to fulfil an obligation. Wherever Christians pray the Spirit is at work. God keeps His word. He fulfils His promise. To Him the prayer of the Church is no conditional proposal from which He pleases to choose what seems reasonable. The prayer of Christians moves heaven and earth, for God Himself is moved when Christians pray. The Holy Spirit speaks, and puts the name of Jesus Christ in our mouths. We speak His name, and with Him and through Him our prayers are lifted up before the throne of God. Christ is present. Why then should God

not hearken to our prayer ? Our prayer is formed by the Holy Spirit and carried through Jesus Christ to God. The trinitarian and thrice holy God allows Himself to be moved by the prayer of His Church. This is the dimension, the dignity, and promise of our prayer : God Himself speaks to God and receives our prayers.

*Prayer for the world in the Lord's Prayer*

When prayers of Christians are more than the recording of selfish and altruistic desires, more than the "heart of religion", more than acceptance of the permission to bring before God the needs of the soul and the expression of praise and gratitude ; when individual prayer is more than a soliloquy of the lonely soul, or contemplation and meditation ; when the prayer of the Church means more than a talk with God — when it signifies the speaking and acting of God with God and our participation in His dominion over the world, then our prayer must find expression in the one which Christ taught His disciples. It is in the Lord's Prayer that our prayer for the world is made.

Thy kingdom come : God watches over the world lest it lay claim to eternity. He helps us to see the things of this world in the right proportion, and in the light of His coming kingdom, which will bring an end to this world. When we pray "Thy kingdom come", we are reminded of the futility of the temporal.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven : there is no greater salvation for this world than that God's merciful will be brought to fulfilment. In this petition we put the earth and all its inhabitants under the will and in the hands of God.

Give us this day our daily bread : according to Luther's catechism, this petition is full of "world" : "What is implied in the words 'our daily bread' ? All things that pertain to the wants and the support of this present life, such as food, raiment, money, goods, house and land, and other property ; a believing spouse and good children ; trustworthy servants and faithful magistrates ; favourable seasons, peace, and health ; education and honour ; true friends, good neighbours, and the like."

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us : when we pray God to forgive us our



trespasses, we bring before His throne all those who have trespassed against us. We speak their names, but not to denounce them before God. We speak their names to bear witness that His forgiveness has made us forgive. Our prayer for the world can never exist without action upon the world. The law of the evil deed giving birth to many other evils — this law to which the world is subject — is now repealed by forgiveness. Heaven and earth, God and our fellow men are all subject to the one Word.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil : when we pray thus, we mean that the prince of this world is the danger to our lives. When God answers this prayer, He will not allow us to fall a prey to him.

*Prayer in the closet and in community*

Prayer as a function of the Holy Spirit leads us out of our loneliness — including the loneliness of prayer — and into the fellowship of the Church. This provides protection against the privacy and isolation in prayer that seeks the closet and shuns the eye of the praying brother. Christ's advice to withdraw from the public and to pray in seclusion is addressed to the Pharisees, whose prayer was not only meant for God but also aimed at arousing admiration. This advice, however, will have validity for us whenever we discover in ourselves dangerous signs of the desire to impress with well-chosen phrases our brethren who are joining us in prayer. This latent aim endangers fellowship, and its recognition is to be understood as a call to prayer in the seclusion of the closet.

But how can the individual Christian dare utter the prayer for the world ? Will he see clearly enough ? Will he not fall a prey to the danger of self-delusion, to the error of confounding the thoughts of his own heart with those of the Spirit ? The act of prayer is a sober matter. "Keep sane and sober for your prayers" (I Peter 4 : 7). It is easier to pray soberly when two or three are gathered together than in private. Christ promised to be present and to answer the prayer of two or three who soberly decide what they should pray for (Matt. 18 : 19 f.). This promise encourages us to consider how prayer for the world can be extended beyond the Lord's Prayer.

*Prayer for the world is intercession*

It has been apparent from the beginning that the prayer for the world of which we have been speaking is intercession. Alfred de Quervain, in *The Prayer*<sup>1</sup>, says: "The greatest service which brothers can render to one another, the veritable service to one's fellow man, is intercession."

The intercessory prayer reaches realms to which human help has no access: isolated lands, the threatening sea, the dangers of the air, inside prison walls. To intercede is to acknowledge that we are powerless. To intercede means to delegate the bringing of help, which we fail to bring, to God. When we intercede for one another, we are included in the heart of the trinitarian act of prayer. Intercession is priestly service. Intercession is more than prayer for the benefit of the world: it is representing the world before God, seeking God's throne on behalf of the world, which cannot or will not pray to Him.

Intercession wipes out the frontiers between the world and ourselves. We approach Him in solidarity with the world, as guilty sinners. However, intercession saves us from identity with the world. Because of the world's inability to pray, we have to give up our identity with it, if we are to dare to pray.

Intercession keeps us from assuming the role of a judge, for it is impossible to be judge and attorney at the same time. Our intercessory prayer is conditioned by the prayer for the enemy; Christ commands: "Pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5: 44). Another criterion for our intercession can be found in I Timothy 2: 1 f, where we are told to pray "for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions". Men "in high positions", possessed of power, are in special need of the prayer of the Church — the unpopular figures lest they seek refuge in solitude and anger, as well as the rulers loved by their people, lest they fall prey to pride and the desire to be like God.

<sup>1</sup> *Das Gebet*, Zollikon, 1948.



*Characteristics of intercessory prayer*

There are several considerations which we should bear in mind when deciding on subjects for intercession.

1. There must be informed knowledge of the persons, things, and conditions — the “world” — for which we intercede. At Tutzing, Bishop K. H. Ting said that poor knowledge of the real situation “prevented many good Christians in the West from knowing how to pray for the Chinese Christians... God, being magnanimous, has listened to the many misinformed prayers, because He does not just listen to the words, but also to the heart behind the words.” God wants our petitions to give Him a difficult task to perform. They are to spur Him into action. But we should not expect Him to correct our prayer. Poorly informed prayer, vague petitions that are not concrete, general formulas and phrases are the expression of laziness, and the Holy Spirit does not assist the lazy.

2. In interceding for the state, we have to bear in mind that our prayer is not identical with a sign of national solidarity. This will make it difficult for us to confound the cause of state and nation with God’s just cause. The aim of our prayer will have to be that God’s justice may be carried out, even against our supposed or well-founded rights.

3. We are to ask ourselves whether the prayer foremost in our minds is always the right one. For example, at a time when our Christian brethren were in prison, we were not to pray above all for their liberation, but that God might make them able to bear a fruitful witness, so that the Gospel might be proclaimed in an environment to which it normally never finds access.

4. Public intercession of a Christian community must never degenerate into a demonstration as a means to acquire political power. This would cause the Church to fall into self-justification. The powerful, too, know fear. Intercession must guard against seeking the ear of the powerful. It must never aim at terrorizing the mighty, against whom our intercession is lifted up to God. God is the only authority to whom our intercession should be addressed.

## Silence and Words

S. SELVARETNAM

*Let any man go into silence, strip himself of all pretence, and selfishness, and sensuality, and sluggishness of soul; lift off thought after thought, passion after passion, till he reaches the inmost depth of all; remember how short a time and he was not at all; how short a time again, and he will not be here: open his window and look upon the night, how still its breath, how solemn its march, how deep its perspective, how ancient its form of light; and think how little he knows except the perpetuity of God, and the mysteriousness of life: — and it will be strange if he does not feel the Eternal Presence as close upon his soul as the breeze upon his brow; if he does not say, “O Lord, art Thou ever near as this, and have I not known Thee” — if the true proportions and the genuine spirit of life do not open on his heart with infinite clearness and show him the littleness of his temptations and the grandeur of his truth.*

JAMES MARTINEAU.

*Be still and know that I am God.*

Silence is not just absence of words. Silence can speak even louder than words themselves. In my younger days a love song used to be sung, “When your lips kept silent and your eyes said you loved me”. Silence is not negative. You do not enter into a vacuum when you enter into silence, for unless you are dead you know your life is pressed around by a world that is real, and you continue to react to it. There is no vacuum. Silence is positive and constructive, even because of the destructive effects silence can work on you. You are not alone in silence. It is the time of real confrontation with the living God, and that is why there is something dreadful about it. It is the time when you meet yourself. I well remember how,



at one of the first retreats at the Ecumenical Institute, at the close of a youth leaders' conference, a young lady who had travelled far to attend this conference protested loudly about the retreat with its long periods of silence. She said, "I came so far to get away from myself, and now you want me to meet myself". It is the time when you meet yourself, and thank God that it is in the presence of Him, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for otherwise it would be disastrous.

I wish to quote in full a hymn, which seems to bring out all that can happen when thus you meet.

In the secret of His presence how my soul delights to hide,  
O how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus' side.  
Earthly cares can never vex me, neither trials lay me low,  
For when Satan comes to tempt, to the secret place I go.

When my soul is faint and thirsty, 'neath the shadow of His  
wings,  
There is cool and pleasant shelter, and a fresh and crystal  
spring.  
And my Saviour rests beside me, as I hold communion sweet,  
If I tried I could not utter what He says when thus we meet.

Only this I know, I tell Him all my doubts and griefs and fears,  
O how patiently He listens, and my drooping soul He cheers.  
Do you think He ne'er reproves me? What false friend He  
then would be,  
If He never, never told me of the sins which I must see.

Would you like to know the sweetness of the secret of the  
Lord?  
Go and hide beneath His shadow, this shall then be your  
reward.  
For whene'er you leave the silence of that happy meeting  
place,  
You will bear the shining image of the Master on your face.

In the silence of the happy meeting place you are stripped, cleansed, renewed, refreshed, and He lifts the light of His countenance upon you.

Words fail at times like this. We see how true this is in human relationships, when we meet a friend, with whom we may have had correspondence and whom we are now meeting

after a long absence. There were many things we wanted to discuss, inquire about, and share, and yet when we meet we have no words for anything, and find ourselves sitting and gazing at each other. Many times my aged mother wrote me to come to see her, for she had a number of things to talk about with me. Each time when we met she had forgotten everything, and she did not need to remember. Sometimes she wrote the things down on a piece of paper, but then she would forget where the paper was. It was love alone she needed, love alone she needed to share, and that need was satisfied.

Silence is where we meet God. "In the castle of my soul is a little postern gate, wherein, when I enter, I am in the presence of God." There we find life; there all life begins to have meaning; there troubles which looked like mountains suddenly become pebbles.

This experience of the presence of God is central in Christian worship, and all Christian worship must give this experience. Life cannot be the same after it. The absence of silence in worship often leaves us tired and frustrated, for our worship has not lead us into this experience.

The natural question is, what is the place of words in worship? We must admit that, even at our best, words are poor expressions of our thoughts or feelings, and will therefore always be inadequate in our relationship with God. With that limitation, words have their place in bringing our thoughts close to God. This is especially true when we come together for corporate worship, but it can be equally true in private prayers. Words give shape to our thoughts and release them, and therefore provide relief for us. In our worship in the Ashram chapel we have a short period of silence at every "step" in the worship, so that the words may come from our lips as expressions of our real and inmost thoughts. The silence before the acts of adoration, confession, and thanksgiving makes these acts more meaningful.

Words can sometimes become the outposts where we wish to meet God tactfully and not let Him come into the citadel of our lives. I have often said that we go to church to avoid meeting God. Under the cover of words as well as behind the man in the front pew, we can avoid His glance and our confession.



Silence strips us, breaks down these outposts ; we meet God in the citadel. It is the time when our faith meets God's Word, and then the miracle of life takes place.

### *Helps to silence*

Retreats have become common, and it is quite customary to use the word retreat for anything which is not a meeting of a standing committee ! However, it must be said that the most important part of a retreat is the quiet time. I want therefore to share with you a few helps to silence.

The words of James Martineau quoted above say a lot about what must and can happen. "O Lord, art Thou ever near as this !"

The first thing to remember is that there should be real yearning for the experience of God's presence. While at college I had a friend whom I never wished to meet, but good relationships demanded that I meet him for an hour on Monday mornings. My clock was always slow so that I was late for the appointment, and I was sometimes able to arrange for the breakfast bell to ring early ! The meeting was empty, and words filled the idle hour. Did we meet at all ?

A brief prayer of cleansing may help us to clear our minds and arouse the longing desire for this hour of tryst. The most appropriate "stepping-stone" into the garden of silence with God may be the Word of God itself. Someone has said, "The Bible is not a book, it is a place". A few verses, read and re-read, and you are with Him for your conversation. You may have to fall back on this over and over again, especially at the beginning, to enable you to keep close to Him. We must not despair of wandering thoughts at any stage in our prayer life. We are hemmed in by the sights and sounds of this world, and our own heart-longing for Him has not become deep enough to enable us to say "yes" to the question, "Lovest thou me more than these". So there is need many times to "awake", to find ourselves, probably on our knees, but far away in the busy world. There is more need for discipline of thought and will than for despair. I wish to add that it may sometimes be good to let ourselves go with our wandering thoughts, for

they may lead us to God with a confession of anxiety, distrust, fear, temptation, lust, self-importance, or bitterness concealed. A familiar hymn, a book of prayers, some heart-longing of a saint, some word, the name of Jesus — all these may help us to return to our fellowship with Him.

Another stepping-stone into this garden with God may be some attribute of God on which we can meditate. God is love. We can support this with verses from Scripture, some hymn, or some other thought or illustration ; and as we meditate on them can enter the garden and there receive from Him something of this attribute for our lives.

There is the familiar story of how once a friend desired to know of St. Francis the secret of his life. He invited him to a meal, and afterwards provided a place for him to sleep in his own room. The host pretended to sleep, and then discovered that Francis got up from his bed, went to a corner of the room, and spent the rest of the night repeating, "My God, my all". These were not words. This was life. A young friend of mine who had high hopes of great things while in school eventually found himself in a comfortable position in life and also in the church. I asked him, "How are you getting on ?", to which he replied, "I am existing, I hope to live some day !" Existence is adjustment to, and in, the world around us. Life is our response to the living God who gave Himself to us in Jesus Christ, our response of love to Him whom we meet in the silence of that happy meeting place, and to whom we say, "My Lord and my God".

*Be still and know that I am God.*

# The Federation and Prayer

SUZANNE DE DIÉTRICH

## *A demonstration of spirit and power*

Every powerful movement in the history of the Christian Church is the work of the Spirit and starts in prayer. The wind of the Spirit blows, sometimes on one man, more often on a group of men, and the first response of these men is a new intensity in prayer — a corporate struggle to see and do God's will.

When we turn to the beginnings of the World's Student Christian Federation, we find men of prayer engaged in this battle of the Spirit. We like to look on the "haystack meeting" as the forerunner of the missionary calling of the Federation: five students gathering for prayer in a field and pledging themselves to go to the mission field, at a time when America had no mission boards. We know how the first hundred Volunteers for Missions came out of a decisive prayer meeting in Mount Hermon in 1886, and how this very meeting was prepared during months by the daily prayers of Robert Wilder and his sister Grace<sup>1</sup>. The founders of the Federation, Wishard, Mott, Fries, were men who believed in the power of prayer and expected great things to happen in the universities of the world. And they did. Those of us who met Robert Wilder remember a simple man with shining blue eyes, who took no great interest in the intellectual problems of students; his sole weapons were the intensity of his prayer and of his love; and he won many, in the most sceptical universities of Central Europe.

It is said of an early General Committee of the Federation (Eisenach, 1898) that decisions were always taken unanimously, never by vote. Anyone who has attended Committees knows that such unanimity is a miracle of the Spirit and needs a

<sup>1</sup> On these beginnings, cf. RUTH ROUSE, *The World's Student Christian Federation*, pp. 35 ff., 38-39.



great deal of preparatory prayer on the part of all concerned ! When John R. Mott started on his world-wide campaigns, he was careful to have groups of people informed of his plans, both in the countries he was to visit and in the Movements which sent him, so that the campaign would be prepared months ahead in prayer. This "communion of the saints" throughout the world has remained a basic factor all through the history of the Federation.

As the Federation grew, as it included students coming from many different theological and confessional backgrounds, new forms of worship were practiced, and the old form of evangelical prayer meeting no longer corresponded to the needs of all Student Christian Movements. Such a development is normal and healthy. But it should also be acknowledged that we have, at certain moments in our history, lost something of the dynamic faith of our forerunners, that faith which believed that with God "all things are possible", and that he who asks shall receive.

To return to our origins means to retain that dynamic belief in the power of prayer which called the Federation into being, filled it with missionary zeal, and made it an instrument of God for the conversion of students throughout the world.

### *The Day of Prayer*

The "Day of Prayer for Colleges" originated in America long before the World's Student Christian Federation came into being. The decision to hold a "Universal Day of Prayer for Students" was taken in 1895, the very year the WSCF was founded at Vadstena, Sweden, and the first Call to Prayer was issued in February 1898<sup>1</sup>. Since then it has been kept faithfully. But General Committee after General Committee has discussed the best possible date ! It seems there is no Sunday in the year when all universities of the world are in session ! All we have been able to achieve is to have two days, one for the Northern and one for the Southern hemisphere.

The Day of Prayer, wherever it is seriously celebrated, has proved a power in the life of the Student Movements. To stand

<sup>1</sup> ROUSE, *op. cit.*, pp. 5, 89.

*together* before the throne of God on that day in a common act of thanksgiving and supplication has probably strengthened more than anything else the sense of fellowship of the SCMs with one another. It is the practice of most Movements to use this day for a common testimony of students from different countries and confessions, so that the universality of the Federation may be shown and lived on the campus.

"The Day of Prayer", writes Ruth Rouse, "is the day of days in the Federation year, a day for proclaiming the power of God and expecting that it will be released." And she quotes from a report of Dr. Mott about his campaign in China in 1913 :

"I cannot explain the marvellous response in Tsinanfu on the last Sunday of February, when over five hundred Government students decided to become Christian inquirers, on any other grounds save that that day was the Universal Day of Prayer for Students, when Christian students and professors throughout the world were associating their prayers on behalf of the students of all lands."

It is perhaps in time of war that the Day of Prayer has taken its deepest significance. Students on the battlefield have prayed for one another across the lines ; moving letters came to us from the trenches during the first world war. And when in 1940 we were isolated from one another, when certain countries were completely out of reach, what strength for Christian students to be aware that the Spirit of God knows no frontiers, and that nothing can separate those who are one in Christ ! Never was the reality of our fellowship more deeply felt.

We are still far, in most countries, from having made full use of the "release of power" of which Ruth Rouse spoke. We should ask more systematically for the prayers of all churches on that day for the wide world of students at home and abroad, and use that time of the year, as some do, for a special effort of witness in our universities.

Of course, the stress laid on this one day does not dispense us from, but should rather be a stimulus to, steadfast prayer throughout the year. The prayer calendar started in recent years by Federation headquarters is a world-wide step in that direction. It seems that at the present time certain needs call for a special concentration of prayer the world over on

precise objects. The call for a new type of missionary or "fraternal worker", coming out of the universities and ready to serve outside their homeland, seems one of the most pressing. Let us recapture that sense of urgency of our early pioneers, while "going at it" by quite different ways and methods !

*The search for new forms of corporate prayer*

In the thirties two factors led the Federation to devote special attention to the whole question of corporate worship : one was its specific character as an ecumenical movement ; the other was the biblical and theological renewal which took place at that time. To be ecumenical meant that the liturgical traditions of the Greek Orthodox and Anglican communions should have their place beside "free prayer". But even in Protestant circles there was a widespread reaction against the "subjective" character of extempore prayer ; a God-centred theology called for a renewal in the realm of hymnology and liturgy. A new awareness of the Church required that more attention be paid to the traditional ways of worship of the different confessions.

A practical consideration also played its part in the process. Federation conferences often suffered from the "improvised" character of their daily services, unconnected with the main themes of the conferences. Language difficulties prevented part of those attending from really participating in services conducted in a foreign tongue and tradition. Attempts were made to prepare cyclostyled services in three languages, and this led in 1935 to the decision to publish two books : the first was meant to educate students in church traditions other than their own ; the second was to contain informal services adapted to student needs, and prayers drawn from the treasure of the Christian Church throughout the ages.

*Venite Adoremus I*

The first edition of *Venite Adoremus I* was prepared in 1935-37 by Ambrose Reeves<sup>1</sup>. As far as I know, nothing of

<sup>1</sup> Then a member of the Federation staff, now Bishop of Johannesburg.



the kind existed at the time in the whole ecumenical movement. It contained services from all main confessions, including Orthodox Vespers and the Roman Catholic Compline (under its ancient Benedictine form). The Chamcoria General Committee had specified that the book should have no communion service, because the Federation as such could not celebrate Holy Communion, and such celebrations were only to be held by each church according to her own discipline. At the time the decision was probably wise. Our ecumenical training was still at an early stage, and such services might have been used in a way contrary to the regulations of the church concerned. We are glad that the new edition published after the war could go a step further, and publish several complete services, instead of the truncated ones of the first edition. This allows an initiation into the worship of other churches than our own at the deepest level. To attend such services without being allowed to communicate is one of the most painful experiences to which our present state of division exposes us; but it is healthy to face the scandal of division at its most sensitive point. It should give increased substance to our prayer for unity. On the other hand, one cannot study this new edition of *Venite Adoremus I* without being struck by the fact that in the liturgical development of most services the similarities are much greater than the differences.

### *Venite Adoremus II*

The purpose of the second volume, *Venite Adoremus II*, was different. It was meant to help students to compose services for use in the local SCM or in student conferences, on a national as well as an international scale; therefore English, French, and German editions appeared in separate volumes, the two former in 1938, the latter after the war. While the editorial work was carried by Francis House and myself, an attempt was made to collect prayers, both ancient and modern, from all over the world. By 1938 we had enough material to publish a sample of services for various occasions and a limited choice of prayers. It was hoped that a third volume with a much larger collection of prayers would soon follow. But the second

world war thwarted this hope. Today a new, completely revised edition of *Venite Adoremus II* is under way. It should probably be said about this kind of volume that it meets a real need in a number of small or young Movements which have no prayer books of their own, while the need is less felt in the larger Movements, notwithstanding its ecumenical value.

### *Cantate Domino*

We cannot close this brief survey of the efforts of the Federation in the realm of corporate prayer without mentioning *Cantate Domino*, the best and most widely used hymnbook in ecumenical circles. Each edition to this day has been an attempt to improve on the former (whether always successful is open to debate!), and the theological evolution of the SCMs can to some extent be detected through their choice of hymns. Psalms and "classical" hymns have gained more and more ground, and this is a definite improvement <sup>1</sup>.

While the Federation has been a pioneer in the realm of liturgical worship at the ecumenical level, it should never forget that this more formal kind of prayer is one trend among many. Free forms of worship, extempore prayer, and the spontaneous prayer meeting keep their rightful and necessary place in the life of the SCM. And whatever forms worship in Federation meetings may take, only one thing matters: the reality of our encounter with the living God.

<sup>1</sup> The name of Suzanne Bidgrain will remain attached to the first edition of *Cantate Domino*. The editorial work of the last edition was done mainly by Helen Morton.

# They that Worship Him

J. ROBERT NELSON

Reflections on Re-reading *Worship in the Ecumenical Movement*,  
WSCF, 1950, by William Nicholls

*Among other factors which have made the ecumenical movement possible, the mimeograph — or cyclostyle — has its distinctive place. Like hundreds of other documents, Nicholls' book was fed to this machine. But the typewritten stencil has never carried the prestige of the galley of type, so this book has not enjoyed the circulation and notice it deserves. Now, two student-generations later, it is certainly worthwhile to bring it to students' attention. Copies are no longer available, and the Federation plans no new edition. But it is rumoured that Nicholls, now Anglican chaplain at the University of Edinburgh, is preparing another book in which he will freely plagiarize his earlier writing.*

There is a rather weary old joke which a friendly Roman Catholic priest tossed my way one Sunday morning. "I believe in freedom of worship", he said. "You go to your church and worship your way; I'll go to mine and worship God's way." But the joke lost its humour when I reflected that he probably believed that his way was indeed divinely ordained, while mine was innovation. Among the participating churches of the ecumenical movement there is little disposition to identify particular modes of worship with the will of God. And yet the confusing diverse array of ways of worship in the many churches makes one wonder whether "they that worship Him" can all be doing so "in spirit and in truth". Is there any possibility that Christians, divided as they are into so many separate communions and traditions, can come to an amicable and truthful agreement as to what may properly be called Christian worship?



The public and private worship of God is the most regular, consistent, and distinctive activity of the Church, the churches, and their individual members. Not many persons are aware of the full variety of the ways in which worship is practiced in the Christian world, or of the diversity of interpretation given to this practice. But every Christian is at least conscious of the fact that the practice of his church is by no means the only Christian way, and that, despite numerous interconfessional agreements, the existing differences constitute barriers to full Christian unity.

# I

Nicholls wrote his "Grey Book" just at the time preparations were being made for the Third World Conference on Faith and Order, held in 1952 at Lund, Sweden. One of the main concerns of this important conference was that of worship. Most of the problems dealt with by Nicholls were also taken up by the preparatory study commission and the appropriate section of the Lund meeting<sup>1</sup>. In their final report, the delegates of the many churches represented were pleased to record a number of hopeful signs for the overcoming of these liturgical barriers to Christian unity. They rejected the popular allegation, which is really a caricature of responsible ecumenical thinking, that unity of the Church requires an enforced uniformity of worship forms and doctrines. They recognized the healthful and perhaps inevitable diversities which exist. But they also registered some very significant agreements, which include, among other points, the following :

a) *The object of Christian worship is the Triune God, who Himself prompts us to worship in faith.* This assertion is rather startling for one who regards worship simply as a person's voluntary act of adoration. But biblical faith is lucid on this point. No-one can confess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord without the prior work of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12 : 3). And it is the same Spirit who "helps our infirmities" as we try to pray

<sup>1</sup> Students who wish to pursue this study should read *Ways of Worship*, SCM Press, London, 1952, and the Lund Conference Report, Chapter IV, same publisher.

(Rom. 8 : 26-27). The noted translator of theological works and writer of devotional books, Olive Wyon, puts it in a positive way :

“The history of religions shows very clearly that no human act of worship is ever adequate... For God alone can offer perfect worship. Christ alone, as the God-Man, has made the one perfect, unspoilt offering to God. By His life of unbroken obedience to the Father’s will, for the first time on earth, man offered an act of worship which was adequate and complete.”<sup>1</sup>

b) *The essential elements of worship, whether or not always included in the same act of service, are adoration, confession, hearing the Word of God, intercession, invocation, oblation, praise, supplication, and thanksgiving.* These elements, as we shall see, are treated by Nicholls in his discussion of worship in the various types of churches.

c) *In the Word and the Sacraments God offers grace, reveals Himself, and draws us into communion with Himself.* While this much is agreed, it must be pointed out, in all candor, that some of the barriers to Christian unity have been erected because of differing interpretations of the meaning of Word and Sacrament and of their mutual relationship in worship.

d) *All worship by the Church, whether in heaven or on earth, whether private or public, is essentially corporate.* This is a concept which is entirely fundamental to the Christian faith and life. Yet it has been obscured time and again during the history of the Church by false emphasis upon the individualism of Christian faith. The idea of the Christian being “alone with the Alone” is as sub-Christian as the popular phrase, “a man and his God”. Happily, the contemporary return to biblical theology and the treasured wisdom of the Church are delivering us from this feeble individualism. The word now in vogue is “community”, and rightly so. The community of the faithful is the community of the worshippers. And T. S. Eliot has wisely reminded us that even the hermit monk, kneeling in his desert cave, prays for the Church, the Body of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> *The Altar Fire*, SCM Press, London, 1954, p. 30.

e) *The Church's worship and its mission to the world belong together.* Some might think, what an odd thing to agree upon! Remember, however, that liturgy means literally service (German: *Gottesdienst*; English: *divine service*; Swedish: *gudstjänst*). The essence of service is obedience, and the Christian's obedience to God consists of abiding by the Gospel and proclaiming it. This means first that the act of witness is itself an act of worship. Moreover, it means that the form of worship, the *cultus* or liturgy, has an evangelistic purpose too. Perhaps Christians ought not to be too conscious of this fact, lest in their zeal to evangelize they manipulate the public worship of God as a workman uses his tools. To this temptation many Christians have yielded, with resulting impoverishment of worship itself. But Christians should at least know that there is a tremendous persuasive power in the way they worship. Testimonies to the conversions of pagans by their being brought into church worship are very numerous, especially in Asia, but also in America and Europe, where post-Christian men and women discover that only valid worship can fill the vacuum in their souls.

f) *In the Holy Communion are recognized both an element of sacrifice, however variously understood, and a quality of mystery which defies full understanding.* Such an agreement was not easily reached, nor with every delegate's conscience fully at ease. When the word "sacrifice" is mentioned, the red flag is unfurled in many minds. Priestcraft, magic, pagan superstition are the associated words in such minds. Now it must be admitted that a deep abyss separates the Christian faith from other religions which make much of priestly sacrifice. One shudders at the sight or photo of Kalighat in India, where goats are slaughtered as sacrificial gifts to the goddess. The Christian shudders more deeply at the thought of Abraham raising his knife over the bound body of his child. And however much vestigial influence the ancient Levitical sacrifices may still exert upon Christian worship (as, for example, in the Epistle to the Hebrews), we are prone to favour the notion that God desires mercy and not sacrifice. Of course, Christian diction is filled with sacrificial words. The "Lamb of God" is "Christ our Passover". The shedding of blood is requisite for forgiveness.



How can we escape the utter confusion on the subject which now obtains? Here there are some wise words by Nicholls: "But this offering is understood not at all in the sense of the heathen sacrifices but as an offering of the one sacrifice of Christ, and of the offering of ourselves, in Him and by His grace, as a response to the love of God announced in the Gospel. There is no question of the repetition of the one sacrifice once offered, for it is in this one sacrifice that Christ is believed to be present" (p. 25). On this point of eucharistic sacrifice we feel that many Roman Catholics make a grave, indeed fatal, mistake.

Of the quality of mystery only a little needs saying. Rationalism has done a thorough job on Protestantism from the eighteenth century to the present. We simply must know, understand, and explain whatever we do. Cleanse the house of God of all symbol and colour; make it black and white and all at right-angles. Put the lecturer's stand in place of the Table, or even in place of the pulpit. So it goes and has gone. But the mystery of God is not so easily covered up or explained away. The glass through which we see is a darkened and smoky one, and beyond it lies — the glory of God. In worship we approach, but never reach, this ineffable glory.

g) *Finally, it was agreed at the Lund conference that, apart from its theological aspect, Christian worship owes its variety in the many churches to a wide range of social and psychological factors.* Christian worship is a sacred matter, and one resents at times the blunt intrusion of the inquiring psychologist, who is suspected of wanting to deal with the service of Holy Communion as he would with voodooism or the contemporary pseudo-religion of "rock 'n' roll". Nevertheless the thoughtful Christian, indeed the theologian, stands to gain by what sociologists and psychologists can tell him about worship (so long as these resist the occupational hazard of illusions of omniscience). In the realm of verbal and pictorial symbols especially, can the scientist help to explicate the meaning of liturgy and relate it more directly to men and women of that which, for want of better precision, is called the modern world.

## II

The novice in the study of worship in the ecumenical movement needs first of all some scheme for classifying the astonishing varieties of worship which he sees, for example, when visiting Quaker, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican, Pentecostal, Reformed, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic churches, to say nothing of further varieties he would behold if, on a round-the-world trip, he could visit churches in many countries. Any plan for putting these varieties into neat categories, without overlapping, is sure to be faulty. But Nicholls has succeeded, I believe, in providing a helpful, threefold structure. The categories of worship types are rightly made dependent upon varying views of the essential nature of the Church itself. These views are in turn dependent upon the three different ways in which Christians understand the relationship of the *continuity* of the Church in history to the *gathering* of its members (p. 23).

a) The first type is the *historical-continuity church*. It emphasizes the Church as the true Body of Christ, a single holy society on earth, which Christ has endowed with a sacramental system, the core of which is the ministry of bishops in historical succession from the days of the apostles. For such a Church the centre of all worship is the Eucharist. Worship is "primarily and essentially taking part in the worship which the ascended Christ offers eternally in heaven at the right hand of the Father". The keynote of such a view of worship is offering, sacrifice. Upward movement is its characteristic imagery: rising flames and incense, raised hands hold the consecrated Host. It is also a worship of strict order. The liturgy may be called the canon, or rule. Spontaneity is excluded. Prayers, readings, movements, postures are prescribed and fixed. The liturgical year is the immovable channel of time for such worship. To say that all Orthodox, Jacobites, Armenians, Roman Catholics, Old Catholics, and Anglicans worship in essentially the same way is false. Yet this is the category to which they all belong, despite many differences one with another.

b) Nicholls calls the second type the *confessing-continuity church*. No ministerial chain can guarantee its continuity, for this resides in the faithful confessing of the true Gospel by the whole body of the Church. He has in mind primarily the great confessional bodies of the Reformation, the Lutheran and the Reformed ; but the view is held by certain Anglicans, Methodists, and even Congregationalists as well. In this category are permitted and enjoyed some varieties of worship form. But whereas the more "catholic" churches of the first type lay very great emphasis upon the Eucharist, and the "gathered churches" still to be mentioned are disposed to give commanding importance to the read and preached Word of God, the churches of this median kind keep a general balance between Word and Sacrament. However formally or informally the service may be conducted, whether adhering to a venerated liturgy or encouraging new forms, these churches are sure that the Word and Sacrament together constitute the Church, and that neither may be exalted over the other. And they should be rather gratified to observe that the contemporary liturgical movement, which affects both Catholic and Protestant churches, is tending to bring Catholics to a more sober and regular dependence upon biblical study and preaching, just as it brings certain Protestants to a more faithful concern for, and practice of, the Sacraments.

c) In the third category are the bodies which prefer to be known as *gathered churches*. Their government centres upon the congregation, and concern for historical continuity, apart from a sequence of generations of faithful Christians, is not great. As Karl Barth's idea has been recently applied to this kind of fellowship, the Church is an "event" which happens when Jesus Christ through the Spirit takes hold of a congregation and makes it to be the Church. Worship is generally free, though usually disciplined by various habits and traditions. Utter spontaneity is treasured by some. And for others, the Quakers, there is complete absence of vocal worship. As noted above, the preaching of the Gospel is the focal point of worship, as is the pulpit of church architecture.

Up to this point Nicholls has been describing and classifying the kinds of worship to be found in the whole of Christendom.



Next he turns to the role played by worship in the ecumenical encounter of the churches which, though divided, are nevertheless seeking ways to make their God-given unity a manifest and tangible reality.

### III

Christian students spend the years of their university study in a situation which is uniquely favourable for the experiencing of the pain of Christian divisions. In their pre-student days, as often in post-student years, they can fit snugly into the community life of their own churches. But at the university they are mixed up with Christians of all sorts and conditions. So it is no wonder that an SCM — unless it be an exclusively denominational Movement — provides the place where a sense of confusion in worship is most likely to grow. For none of us can worship simply as a Christian, so long as the churches of which we are members are divided from one another. It may be easy enough, says Nicholls, for Christians to recognize one another as Christians. "Yet the whole problem of the ecumenical movement is that while we can in this way recognize one another as belonging to Jesus Christ, we cannot all yet recognize one another's churches as churches in the true and full sense of the word" (p. 44). The movement to reach the point of such churchly recognition is nevertheless a movement of individual Christians too. The common experiences and spiritual discoveries of such persons in their life together provide the data which the churches as such must take into account when they ponder their relations with other churches.

Time and again one hears that the most significant experience at an ecumenical conference was in common worship. This testimony must not be underestimated. SCM members, like churchmen generally, need to seize every opportunity for inter-confessional worship. The SCM is not *just* a prayer group. But woe unto it if it is not a prayer group.

There is a danger lurking in this common worship, however, which Nicholls' own words can best describe :

While it is especially in worship that we become aware of our given unity in Christ, this remains a unity in division.

It does not abolish our divisions, either theological or in ways of worship. It is also well to remember that such unity as we have requires for its achievement on the human side a great deal of mutual forbearance. We all have to make certain sacrifices for the sake of being able to work together, for we can none of us expect to find in a service at an ecumenical conference precisely what we are accustomed to in our own tradition. Just how far these sacrifices ought to go remains one of our most difficult problems. For if such sacrifices are carried too far, we cease to bring into the ecumenical fellowship the worshipping tradition of our own churches. We impoverish the worship of the community, and we become a mere group of individuals, representing nobody, and contributing nothing to reunion. Indeed we are in danger of generating a new division. On the other hand, if such mutual forbearance is insufficiently practiced, we fail to achieve any unity in worship — we scandalize one another, especially those who are most immature spiritually and in their ecumenical experience, and we move away from, rather than towards, spiritual unity. But where the balance is rightly struck, we can find in the ecumenical fellowship a remarkable enrichment of our understanding of worship (p. 69).

The accepted policy of the Federation, which has been expressed repeatedly in reports and discussions, is that it does not exist to compete with the churches. It may well serve the purpose of making students feel dissatisfied with certain elements of their own churches, but it must never make them irresponsible members of them. Therefore all attempts to fabricate an *ersatz* ecumenical worship form are to be discouraged. The selection and presentation of the services in *Venite Adoremus I* are intended to prevent that very thing from happening. Yet this does not mean an acceptance of the liturgical divisions, as distinct from mere diversities, as being permanent and immutable. In the patient, informed, and faithful observance of worship together, Christians can contribute towards the upbuilding of the whole Church, which is precisely what the Apostle Paul exhorted us to do. This comes about by our striving to attain what Nicholls styles “the fulness of worship” by the method he calls “maximum ecumenism”. And the clue

to this he finds in the proper understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Sacraments which He gave us.

When we all learn to give a due place to both Word and Sacrament, though no doubt we shall continue to understand them in a different manner, there is the possibility that we shall come to see more clearly the way in which that Word and Sacrament are related to the unity of the Church. For it is our practice in worship which more than any single factor moulds our conception of the Church. This is the complementary truth to that which we have previously stressed in saying that our conceptions of worship are dependent upon our conceptions of the Church (p. 51).

For the student who is not versed in theological studies, these questions may seem profoundly difficult, if not wholly beyond him. To the theologian they are difficult enough. Nevertheless, if we accept the call to Christian unity as a divine summons, it is incumbent upon us all to respond primarily in this duty of worship, wherein our presently divided voices adore the one Lord who calls.



# The Lord's Prayer

A Bible Study by MARIE-JEANNE COLEMAN

As we have just recalled our world fellowship by observing the Universal Day of Prayer for Students, it seems appropriate for us to stop for a while and meditate over the significance of Christian prayer, and to take as a basis for our study the Lord's Prayer.

All Christians under every sky and in every language have been taught to address God as Our Father, *Pater Noster*, repeating the words taught by Jesus to His disciples. In some Christian traditions the Lord's Prayer is commonly used to conclude an extempore prayer (sometimes nearly as a matter of convenience) ; in others it is part of a strict liturgical pattern, where it may even occur more than once in the same service. In some cases it is repeated in unison or sung by all the faithful, whereas in others the congregation associate themselves with it in silent reverence. At home children may repeat it as they go to bed, all mixed up with the usual "God bless mummy, daddy... my teacher... and Teddy!", or the sick mutter it feebly as a last resort.

The Lord's Prayer, this prayer without which the whole of Christendom would hardly dare approach the throne of grace, what is its significance for us? What did it mean originally? What does it teach us about Christian prayer in general, and about our own prayer life?

We find it recorded in Matthew 6 : 5-13 and in Luke 11 : 1-4. The second is a shorter version, ending with "Lead us not into temptation". In Matthew we find two versions, according to the manuscripts : the short one, used in most Catholic traditions, stopping at 6 : 13 ; the long one used in most Protestant traditions, ending with what is commonly called the "doxology" : "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen" (6 : 13 b). We shall come back to this point when we reach the doxology at the end of this study.

In Luke 11 : 1 we witness how the disciples, who have so often seen Jesus retire on the mountain to pray, begin to realize that there is something vital in such constant intercourse with God, and therefore want to be introduced to it. It is not that as Jews they had not learned and used prayers and formulas (you need only think of some of the psalms), but such intimate relationship with God was new to them (or to the Gospel writer), and they had the intuition that it was of tremendous value. Hence the request, "Teach us to pray". How much we still need such teaching two thousand years later !

Let us therefore turn to our Lord's Prayer and examine it in detail.

### 1. *Our Father, which art in heaven*

In this simple phrase we have put together the most important things Jesus reveals to us about God and our relation to Him.

a) *Father* : God is not only the all-powerful Creator, nor is He a mysterious, remote Spirit. God is as personal as a human father, who knows His children and indeed cares for them better than a human father does (Luke 15 : 11-32 ; Matt. 7 : 7-11, 6 : 7-8).

The Aramaic for Father was *Abba* (Mark 14 : 36). What significance does St. Paul give to our being able to address God as Father, *Abba* ? (See and compare Matt. 11 : 27 ; II Cor. 1 : 3 ; Eph. 1 : 3 ; Rom. 8 : 15 ; Gal. 4 : 4-7.)

If such a meaning of the words inspired awe and wonder and outbursts of joy at the time, what is it that has worn them down in our day, and how could we recapture them or their modern equivalent ? Where would we be if "Father" were, in fact, merely a word ?

b) *Our Father* : We cannot pray to God just on our own, without including in such prayer all His children around the world. God is as much the Father of all those whom we ignore or dislike, of those whom we despise (how can we despise them if they are God's children ?), of our enemies. *Our Father*... it is useless for us to come to Him as if He were our private benefactor. We are His, but only together with everyone else.

How much do we realize this when we pray? What specifically should such an opening of our prayer induce us to do in our church? in our community? in the political and international realm?

c) Our Father which art *in heaven*: "Our Father" brings God close to us, in the world of human relationships. "Which art in heaven" reminds us that God is well outside our reach, beyond us, and that apart from His initiative to come down to us, we could not reach Him (John 1: 1-4, 9-13; 8: 19, 21, 23). It puts us in our proper place as humble creatures (Ps. 8; Is. 55: 8-9) whose knowledge and understanding are limited.

If we kept such things in mind, how would it affect us? Would it help us to understand Job (Job 40: 1-5; 42: 1-6)?

d) Our Father *which art in heaven*: A God who truly is. Not one about whom we just read in a book or of whom we dream, not just "some Being", very vague, but the Living God who has revealed Himself in history and acted in His Son; a God with whom we may reckon — with whom we *must* reckon.

Do we truly believe in such a living God when we come to Him in prayer? Are our worship services conducted with the consciousness that they are addressed to such a living Being — a Father in heaven, or do we perform them more for our own satisfaction and edification, to impress ourselves, failing to impress God?

## 2. *Hallowed be thy name*

The name in the Bible means the person himself. Actually a person's name is very important to this day, and to know someone's name is to have some power over him (think of identification papers, etc.). God is not the "unknown" God: He has revealed Himself (Ex. 3: 14-15, and see above references for *Abba*).

To hallow (make holy) God's name is to regard Him as God and give Him the worship and obedience due to Him. In both Old and New Testaments God's children, to whom He has revealed Himself, must make Him manifest in their lives. He must be recognized as God through them and because



of them (Matt. 5 : 16, 18 ; I Pet. 2 : 12 ; Lev. 19 : 2 ; 20 : 7 ; 22 : 31-32). God Himself will see to it that it is done. He will hallow His name by His mighty acts (Is. 29 : 23 ; 48 : 11 ; Ezek. 36 : 23-27 ; Ps. 79 : 9). Our prayer is a begging for God to realize such promises. It is indeed a prayer that may turn against us, as we are the ones who should manifest Him.

What place do we make for such a concern in our lives ? in our worship ? Does the fact that only Jesus perfectly fulfilled His function (to hallow God's name) allow us to shirk such responsibility (Matt. 5 : 48 ; John 17 : 18-23) ? How are we bound to Him in this ?

### 3. *Thy kingdom come*

This petition is intimately connected with the previous one. Above all, God hallows His name by bringing in His kingdom. What is asked for here is certainly the coming of the kingdom *in power*, the breaking in and the final establishment of the new aeon, the new era (Mark 1 : 15 ; 9 : 1 ; 14 : 25 ; Rev. 11 : 15-17 ; 12 : 10). It has already broken in with Jesus (Mark 4 : 2-32 ; Matt. 11 : 1-6 ; Luke 9 : 60 ; 10 : 9 ; Mark 1 : 21-27 ; Luke 4 : 18-21 ; Matt. 12 : 28). But in the fullest sense it is still in the future and an object of hope. In the early Church this hope will be bound up with the expectation of the return of the risen Lord : "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22 : 20).

What are our modern ideas about the kingdom of God ? How do they compare with the biblical conception of it ? How much do we wish God's sovereign manifestation ? Would we feel we were missing something if "Thy kingdom come" were not in the Lord's Prayer ? Would we be relieved ? What does our attitude indicate about our faith ? What kind of a God do we seem to want ? Is this still God ?

### 4. *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*

We cannot pray this unless we mean "Thy will be *done*, and *done by me*". This is the other side of the coin of the prayer, "Thy kingdom come". We cannot call for it without offering ourselves as servants of this kingdom. There is no general way in which God's will can be done outside human obedience.

As we pray this petition, we must make our own Jesus' words in John 4 : 34, and Mark 14 : 32-42 (see Matt. 7 : 21 ; Mark 3 : 35 ; Luke 12 : 47-48 ; John 5 : 30 ; John 6 : 38 ; Rom. 12 : 1-2 ; Col. 1 : 9-10). In one sense God's kingdom comes whenever and wherever God's will is acknowledged and obeyed on earth ; whenever and wherever His Son is accepted in faith and obedience, there is such a thing as God's *will*.

"...as it is in heaven" and "on earth" are inseparable. The first reminds us that it is *His* reign we are calling for, and that He *is* King indeed (read Col. 1 : 15-20, where heaven is very real and ruled over in all might by God and Christ). But it brings home to us also that He wants us to be partakers of His kingdom, and to manifest it here on earth, among the trivialities of everyday life. It is no good to make great idealistic speeches about the brotherhood of men, if we do not take on our share of men's burdens.

To what extent are we slack in doing God's will because of defeatism, because we believe that men or blind forces are ruling and not God ? Do we believe in Him as the King ? What does this petition require from us specifically and immediately, so that we do not make of our prayer a blasphemy ?

### 5. *Give us this day our daily bread*

With this petition we come to the second part of the Lord's Prayer. Until now it has been concerned with God and His demands on us ; now we can bring to Him in the right perspective the needs of men.

The word "daily" was a difficult one to translate. Scholars have debated it since the earliest days. But whatever the closest translation, the general meaning is clear. God's children are to ask him for sufficient provision *from day to day* (the original expression seems to indicate the equivalent of the daily ration issued to slaves, soldiers, workmen — Luke 12 : 42 — or to mean the coming day, tomorrow). In any event, all we are to ask for is enough to keep us going and to enable us to fulfil our duties the next day — and no more. Faith is not a single act of trust done once for all ; faith is a daily recognition of God's Lordship, and a surrender to Him of our lives, both physical and spiritual. This petition cannot be interpreted

only in a spiritual sense as many would like (see Matt. 6 : 27-35 ; prayer is precisely our only means of overcoming and preventing anxiety, I Pet. 5 : 7 ; Phil. 4 : 6).

But we are also tempted to believe that bread, physical care, is all we need for our lives, and furthermore, that God owes it to us. We would do well to recall here Jesus' reply to the Tempter in Matthew 4 : 4, quoting Deuteronomy 8 : 3. Along the same line, Christians are bound to remember that there is another bread upon which they can feed by God's grace (John 6 : 25-35, 41, 48-51).

Asking God for our daily subsistence is asking Him for both our spiritual and physical subsistence, and realizing that the only one that saves us from ultimate death is the spiritual, realizing that we may be well fed physically, but actually half dead of starvation, if we do not feed on the Bread of Life.

Do we believe that God has something to do with our daily food ? Can we ask Him for it, if we do not care about the starvation of our fellow men ? If we are not prepared to share our abundance or even poverty (remember how inadequate were the provisions of the disciples for the feeding of the five thousand) ? May we pray God for daily food, and rest satisfied that multitudes are spiritually starved, and not lift a finger to help ? What does such prayer require of us immediately in our situation ?

#### 5. *Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors*

Debts, trespasses, sin, punishment for sin — all these meanings are covered by the Aramaic word. And "debt" itself is often used in the New Testament as a metaphor for "sin" (Matt. 18 : 23-35 ; Luke 7 : 41-43). Already in the Old Testament men cried out to God in their distress, calling for forgiveness (Ps. 51, etc.), and the very theme of John the Baptist's preaching and baptism is an anxious call to repentance for the obtaining of forgiveness (Mark 1 : 4). This longing is at last fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Matt. 9 : 1-6 ; Acts 10 : 43). In Matt. 18 : 21-35 we see that the God of love is also a righteous Lord. He requires obedience and that justice be done. How does that compare with our conception of an easy-going, forgiving father ?

"Forgive *us* our debts." In this petition, as in the parable (Matt. 18 : 21-35), our fellow men are intimately associated with us. No-one can ask God for forgiveness unless he includes all those who are in need of forgiveness with him, especially those of whom he happens to know. "Forgive *me* my debts" is an impossible prayer to present to our Father unless we add "and all in need of forgiveness". It requires also that we ourselves be reflections of God's mercy, as exemplified in the story and in the second part of our petition. We find an anticipation of it in the Jewish tradition : "Forgive thy neighbour thy injury, and then, when thou prayest, thy sins will be forgiven" (Ecclus. 28 : 2).

"Forgive us our debts *as we also have forgiven our debtors.*" The verb is inescapably in the past tense, although over and over again efforts have been made to cover this up, because of the difficulty it seems to create by implying that God's mercy is conditional. What is required of us is not a mere intention, or even decision to forgive in the future, but present forgiveness. The parable shows us that failure to forgive on our part is equivalent to nullifying God's pardon and grace to us. It means that we deny that His will is mercy, and in fact we ourselves stand up against it. When we approach Him full of bitterness over some harm or offence we have suffered, all worked up about what we so easily call *our* offended *rights*, who do we think we are ? What *are* our rights, if you please ? Do we think we are God, thus once again closing our hearts to Him who can save us only if we admit that we are also debtors ? Without our recognition of our true position before God, any prayer we may address to Him for forgiveness is but a hypocritical approach, trying to put Him on our side and thus increase our self-righteousness, closing ourselves for good to the healing action of His Spirit. An unforgiving heart is closed to forgiveness because it is incapable of true repentance.

What does it mean to belong to the great community of the forgiven, "redeemed", the Church ? Why is it that there is so much pride among Christians ?

8. *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*

"Temptation" can mean "trial" in the sense of suffering, persecution, martyrdom, or the seductions of sin. Most likely



the former is what is meant (Rom. 5 : 3-5 ; Jam. 1 : 2-4 ; I Pet. 1 : 6). For Judaism during the last two centuries B.C. and for the Church in the first three centuries A.D. temptation meant above all hardships and trials leading up to religious persecutions. Such challenge to faith and trust in God can indeed ultimately lead to apostasy, the worst possible sin. Thus exterior trials are indeed spiritual temptations.

That we should ask *God* not to lead us into temptation is and has been a source of bewilderment. James 1 : 13 seems indeed to be dealing with a misunderstanding, a misuse of that request. Is God the tempter ? It seems impossible to come to a satisfactory logical explanation of this expression. Yet does it not express the fact that even in temptation we have not come under the all-powerful rule of a rival, but that we are still in God's hands, that He is, so to speak, testing us ? Our request would, therefore, be that He not test us with such trials that we shall fail Him. Only those who have come to know their frailty in such circumstances, and have cried out to God, can recognize that, although the logic of the argument is weak, it proves to be true. Only with trusting faith in God can we pray such a prayer, regardless of its inconsistency, and find strength and comfort where cold logic could lead to despair.

"...but deliver us from evil." Evil may grammatically be neuter, "the evil state or condition", or masculine, "the evil one". The grammar of the whole phrase, however, suggests deliverance from a personal adversary, and there is no getting away from the fact that the New Testament believed in the Archenemy of God and man, Satan (Matt. 13 : 19 ; Eph. 6 : 16 ; Matt. 12 : 27 ; Luke 4 : 1-13 ; 10 : 18 ; Matt. 26 : 41 ; John 12 : 31 ; 14 : 30 ; 16 : 11 ; Heb. 2 : 14-15). In other words, temptation is a real thing, we have a real battle to fight (Eph. 6 : 10-20). But here again our hope is in God's power (I Pet. 1 : 6-9 ; Rom. 8 : 35-39). We can trust God and count on His victory, because Jesus has fought the battle and won the victory (Matt. 4 : 1-11 ; Heb. 2 : 15-18 ; 4 : 15 ; 5 : 7 ; and above all on the Cross).

What does it mean for us today to pray this petition of the Lord's Prayer in its present form ? Can we do it with our modern interpretations of the sources of evil in this world ?

Do we have to reject those in order to be in line with the Christian faith? Can we discard the biblical view as naive and outmoded? Can we pray this prayer and still be honest? If so, how? If not, what should we do? Does Christ's victory mean anything for our everyday lives?

9. *For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory*

This doxology is present only in Matthew, and even there it is omitted by three of the most important manuscripts. The early Fathers also do not seem to have known it. But such doxologies were not unusual, even in Old Testament days (cf. I Chron. 29 : 11 ; Luke 2 : 14 ; II Tim. 4 : 18 ; Rev. 1 : 6 ; 4 : 11 ; 11 : 15 ; 12 : 10).

The text of this closing of the Lord's Prayer also varies slightly according to the manuscripts. These differences are probably due to various local practices, as scholars believe that it was added to the original prayer when it became used liturgically in the various churches in the second century. It may have been the response given by the whole congregation to the prayer otherwise read by the worship leaders (such practice is still to be found among Lutheran churches). In any event, such a doxology is a most suitable closing for a prayer in which at every stage we contemplate God in His sovereign power and love, and ask Him for His grace to live as His true servants to the glory of His name. With it we are again looking up to Him rather than to our needs, and conclude as it were on a final act of triumphant faith.

It is interesting to note that the doxology is a late liturgical addition. It throws light on the fact that Jesus did not teach the Lord's Prayer to His disciples as a liturgical formula (the only truly liturgical part not being included then), but rather as an example and exercise for true prayer. This conviction is at the source of all effort to define what Christian prayer should be on the basis of the Lord's Prayer. It seems further supported by the context in which we find it in Matthew 6 : 7-8.

What light do such remarks throw on our attitude to the Lord's Prayer and our ways of using it : *a*) liturgically? *b*) privately? How can we make it more meaningful for ourselves, and make of it an inspiration to our prayer life as a whole?

# THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

## Prayer in the SCM

We are reproducing below three texts which represent recent Federation thinking on the subject of prayer. The first is the section on "Worship and Prayer" from *A Student Christian Movement Handbook* published by the WSCF. The second is an extract from the "Practical Conclusions" of the report of the Commission on the Call to Holy Living at the Federation General Committee at Tutzing. The third text is an extract from the report of the Commission on Personal Vocation at the Santa Ana Leadership Training Course, organized by the Federation for the Central American countries.

It is interesting to note that the second and third texts emphasize the link which exists between prayer and both Bible reading and participation in the life of the Church. This twofold relationship must be kept in mind by every SCM which is endeavouring to have a disciplined prayer life.

### I

#### WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Prayer is an indispensable part of the life of Christian groups and individuals, and should be the backbone of the work of the SCM. No activity should be undertaken which is not surrounded and supported by prayer. It is a conscious and constant relating of the life and work of the Movement to God. Those who practise it know it as a source of knowledge and power: knowledge of the will of God and power to interpret it in action. The SCM should constantly remind its members of these facts, encourage them to develop habits of personal prayer, and help them to overcome their difficulties.

a) *Personal prayer and worship*, like corporate prayer and worship, involves part or all of the following acts or elements — Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication, and Intercession:

*Adoration*: The individual who prays realizes that he is in the presence of God Almighty. Such realization prompts him to make

an act of adoration and worship glorifying the Person whose presence he has entered.

*Confession* : But the realization of the presence of God also makes him aware of his own unworthiness, sinfulness, and inadequacy. Hence he makes an act of confession, laying before God his own waywardness and guilt.

*Thanksgiving* : While conscious of his own sinfulness, he is also aware of the forgiveness that God has already granted to all through the death and resurrection of Jesus. He accordingly goes on to thank God for His redemption and forgiveness, and for the gift of prayer.

*Supplication* : He brings to God his burdens, desires, and hopes, and prays for His grace. He makes known to Him his innermost wishes.

*Intercession* : While praying for ourselves, we have also the responsibility to bring to God the needs of our fellow students, our nation, and the world.

b) *Prayer cells*. Apart from individual and personal prayer, Christian life involves praying corporately and in groups. In some SCMs, members form themselves into "cells" or small groups for informal but regular prayer. These generally consist of three or four persons who are usually good friends. In the "cells" the members share their most intimate problems, and pray for one another and for common concerns.

c) *Corporate prayer and worship*. The SCM should not only help its members to learn to pray, but it should also teach them something of the rich heritage of Christian worship throughout the ages and in the various traditions. The sympathetic sharing in the liturgical life of another church is one of the most valuable ways of learning to understand the tradition of that church. As an ecumenical fellowship, the SCM provides a unique opportunity for this growth of understanding and experience of Christian worship.

*Daily corporate prayers*. These may not be very difficult to arrange where the universities have residential halls, and prayers may be held either in the morning or evening to suit the convenience of the participants. In some universities where there are no residential halls, a member of the SCM who is responsible for this aspect of its life may secure from the university authorities the use of a suitable room in the university, where SCM members may gather for corporate prayer for a few minutes during the morning or afternoon session. If such a room is not available, a suitable place near the campus



may be arranged for. A student centre near the campus may become very strategic in such situations. It can give both residential and day scholars an opportunity to meet together and worship God. Younger students may be specially encouraged to take their part in leading the prayers.

*Chapel services.* The worship life of the SCM is greatly helped when there is a college or university chapel on or near the campus. Even when there is a chaplain, the SCM should make a special effort to attend these services, since, especially in larger universities, they may provide the only opportunity for united worship.

Even in colleges or universities where no chapels exist, SCM services can be arranged at suitable places. The Universal Day of Prayer for Students (which falls on the third Sunday in February in the Northern hemisphere and somewhat later in the Southern) is observed by all SCMs, but individual SCMs also celebrate such occasions as independence day, graduation day, Christmas, etc. In certain countries services are conducted with special reference to the indigenous cultural background, for example services in the Ashrams<sup>1</sup> of India. Where possible, this form of worship should be encouraged.

d) *School of prayer.* This usually takes the form of a seminar or conference with prayer as its theme. Prayer is dealt with in addresses, discussions, etc., which are meant to help the participants in their understanding and practice of prayer. Special speakers are invited and are requested to help the SCM in the education and encouragement of its members in this realm.

e) *Helps to prayer and worship.* Where needed, the SCM must try to produce suitable printed material to guide the students in their personal prayer life and study of the Bible. It is also helpful to have a monthly list of suggested topics for daily intercession.

### *Retreats*

These are best held in small groups which consist chiefly of SCM leaders or selected members. These retreats offer an opportunity for the participants to forget for a while the cares, demands, and interruptions of university life and study, and the "busy-ness" of organizing an SCM, and to devote their time to prayer, worship, and meditation, and thus to recapture the vision of Christ and to renew their souls and spirits for the task ahead. Officers and leaders

<sup>1</sup> Corporate meditation centres where self-help, simple living, and earnest contemplation are encouraged.

of SCMs in certain countries hold retreats before a university term begins, and prepare themselves spiritually to carry out their responsibilities with fresh insight, courage, and vigour.

The retreats should preferably be held in quiet spots away from the university and the busy city. But this may not always be possible due to financial considerations. In such a case, the participants may be asked to bring their own food and to meet in any suitable quiet spot (university camps, etc.) on a day when there are no classes.

An experienced leader is essential, and the program should provide ample opportunity for silence, individual thought and prayer. The best preparation for profitable periods of silence is often found in periods of corporate meditation and Bible exposition.

Business and problems of organization should not be allowed to intrude on the retreat. If a business session must be held, it should be totally separate from the program of the retreat and should not interfere with it.

## II

### DEVOTIONAL LIFE AND WORSHIP

In considering the devotional life of students today, the General Committee was forced to recognize that the pattern of life which included the "Morning Watch"<sup>1</sup> no longer exists.

A number of differences in the environment and condition of students was noted — the growth of numbers in the universities, the change in the economic and social status of students, the enlarged scope of their studies with the consequent fragmentation of university life, the inevitable involvement in the pressures and tensions of society, and a tightly organized life within the university. This revolution in the pattern of student life has not been matched by an equivalent revolution in the pattern of devotional life, and often students have a bad conscience because they do not live by the "Morning Watch".

This applies particularly to personal prayer life and Bible reading. There is an impression that prayer is not being grasped imaginatively by students, nor do they see any relation between the traditional forms of prayer and worship, in which they have often been brought up, and their whole university life.

<sup>1</sup> The practice common in the Federation for many years of spending an hour before breakfast in private prayer and Bible study.

Although scholarship has in many ways brought the Bible to life through the many aids available, students have yet to learn how to make the best constant use of this help in their private Bible reading. The general organization of student life militates against any easy solution of the problem of finding the necessary time for a serious reading of the Bible.

Some national Movements have these concerns very much at heart, and various experiments have been made over a number of years, but the result has often been a stalemate, for example, the British SCM has for three years discussed the advisability of producing a specimen "rule of life" to help its members in framing their own discipline, but so far no suitable document has been produced. As far back as 1949 Sir Walter Moberly, in his widely read book, spoke of the necessity of "new patterns of lay sanctity" as part of the answer to "the crisis in the university".

The General Committee notes the concern of SCMs in relating their members to the life and worship of local congregations. The rich experience gained through the ecumenical and stimulating fellowship in the university tends to estrange students from the life of the local congregation. The General Committee therefore wishes to emphasize the importance of helping students to see their privileges and responsibilities as members of a local church. In particular SCMs need to point their members to the teaching and discipline of their own denominations with regard to the Sacraments, since the SCM itself, not being a church, cannot lay down its own disciplines concerning sacramental worship. Moreover, SCM members, on completing their studies, should be encouraged to take an active part in a local church and thus humbly contribute to the renewal of the Church's life and work. Just as the SCM seeks to teach its members to love the world in all its sin and weakness, so it must also teach them to love the congregation to which they belong.

### III

#### OUR PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL LIFE

God's call which converts us to Himself establishes at the same time communion between Himself and the believers. The purpose of our devotional life is to maintain this communion ("devotion", according to the dictionary, means "love of God, readiness to do His will, religious fervour"). Since God's call not only converts individuals but also creates a community, the Church, individual

devotional life in itself is not enough. We must stress the twofold requirement: that there is no personal devotional life without participation in the devotional life of the Church, and that there is no devotional life of the Church without personal devotional life. On the other hand, we must recognize that our whole life must be "devotion", worship rendered to God. From this viewpoint we ask ourselves: what then is the meaning of specific periods of devotion, the moments in our lives which we dedicate entirely and exclusively to God? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to recognize that the natural consequence of an active life in this world, which is still contaminated by sin, is to forget to some extent the fundamentals which are at the root of the Christian faith. Therefore, the purpose of devotional periods is to enable us to hear God in His eternal truth and to renew our faith. We do not seek to hear something completely new, but to renew our knowledge of His unchangeable truth.

The Holy Scriptures are absolutely essential to this, for they are the original witness to God's action in Jesus Christ. Although many pages of the Bible are difficult to understand, when we trust in the power of God to enlighten us, we can receive His message, hear His Word. If we are to understand everything in the Bible, it is essential that we not lose sight of the unity of its central message, the redemptive plan of God in the person of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, every Christian in his Bible study must make use of all available aids which he can handle. Thus, for instance, a university student must use biblical commentaries and theological knowledge (we must oppose the idea that theological knowledge is the exclusive property of pastors).

These periods of personal devotion become a dialogue thanks to the gift of prayer through which we express our confidence in God. Among the difficulties in the practice of personal prayer we have mentioned the danger of monotony; this feeling may be overcome by means of spontaneous silent prayer in any place or circumstance. It may be that we speak too much in our prayers; silence must be an element in them, since they are a dialogue between God and us. Moreover, we often pray in a wrong way, due to our defective knowledge of God and His will. This is why there can be no true prayer if we do not nourish ourselves on the message of the Bible.



## **The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry<sup>1</sup>**

### Reflections on the Aims of Theological Education

#### A. AN ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK AND SOME CRITICAL COMMENTS

HANS-RUEDI WEBER

#### FOREWORD

The book constitutes the first part of the report on "The Study of Theological Education in the United States and Canada", involving the work of self-examination of more than one hundred theological schools. This first part will be followed by a volume offering a more detailed study of the schools, faculties, students, curricula, etc., while the third portion of the report is being published in a series of bulletins dealing with subjects requiring special emphasis or statistical tables. The study has also sponsored a symposium on the history of the Christian ministry, which has just been published.

This part of the report is written by the director of the study. It is a somewhat personal effort to clarify and organize ideas about Church, ministry, and theological education which seem to be "in the air". The book is the result of a cooperative effort, though in the end one member of the group needed to develop and formulate the "sense of the meeting".

#### Chapter I. — THE CHURCH AND ITS PURPOSE

##### *I. The Context of Theological Education*

Education is so closely connected with the life of a community that queries about the aims of teaching and learning cannot be answered unless ideas about the character and purpose of the society in which it is carried on are clarified first of all.

##### *II. Denomination, Nation or Church?*

The first, superficial impression is that theological education in North America is carried on within the context of the denomination.

<sup>1</sup> By H. RICHARD NIEBUHR, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1956.  
134 pages.

But this pluralism of denominations seems to be a reflection of the pluralism of democracy. One is tempted, therefore, to define the context of theological education as the American "way of life" or the common life of the "free society".

Yet the principle of unity in this Protestantism is not the democratic principle, but the Church, the *Una Sancta*. Evidence of this sense of context is given in academic statements of purpose, in the school libraries, in the course of study (Bible, Church History, etc.), and in the work of the interdenominational schools.

### III. *Towards a Definition of the Church*

Without a definition of the Church it is impossible to define adequately the work of the ministry for which the school is to prepare its students.

The nascent agreements on the nature of the Church can only be described by polar analysis: There are polarities within the Church like those of "community" and "institution", "unity" and "plurality", "locality" and "universality", "protestant" and "catholic". There are other polarities where the Church itself becomes a pole: the Church as the subjective expression of the objective rule of God, and the very fundamental polarity between Church and world.

### IV. *The Purpose of the Church: The Increase of the Love of God and Neighbour*

Many objectives of the Church are mentioned in the statements of purpose made by schools. But is there one end beyond the many objectives, as there is one Church in the many churches? After having discussed the present-day debates on this subject, Prof. Niebuhr concludes that no substitute can be found for the definition of the ultimate goal of the Church as the increase among men of the love of God and neighbour.

### V. *Confusing Proximate with Ultimate Goals*

Some of the external and internal conflicts in theological education arise from the confusion of all the proximate goals with this ultimate goal.

The critical discussion of these confusions is summarized with the phrases: denominationalism, not the denominations; ecclesiasticism, not the churches; Biblicism, not the Bible, Christism, not Jesus Christ: these represent the chief present perversions in Church and theology.

## Chapter 2. — THE EMERGING NEW CONCEPTIONS OF THE MINISTRY

### I. *The Perplexed Profession*

Schools of theology in North America tend to neglect the first function of a theological school: the exercise of the intellectual love of God and neighbour. They have rather concentrated on the task of educating ministers. This involves them now in great difficulties, since the contemporary Church is confused about the nature of the ministry.

Similar confusions happened also in other periods of the Church's history, but there were also times when there was a definite conception of the ministry. The "Pastoral Rule" of Gregory the Great formulated the mediaeval theory of the minister as the pastoral ruler or ruling pastor. Similarly, the Roman Catholic conception of the minister as priest is more or less precise. The same is true of the ministry in the churches of the Reformation: the minister as a preacher of the Word. In the days of Pietism and Evangelicalism this conception was modified in the direction of the conception of the minister as evangelist.

### II. *Pastors, Preachers, and Priests*

Whenever in Christian history there has been such a definite, intelligible conception of the ministry, four things at least were known about the office:

a) *The Work of the Ministry*: (i) Preaching and teaching, (ii) leading worship and administering Sacraments, (iii) presiding over the Church and overseeing of its work, and (iv) pastoral care are the four fundamental elements in the work of the ministry. But the government of souls was predominant in the work of the mediaeval pastoral ruler, while preaching and teaching was the main work of the ministry in the Reformation, and still more of the Wesleyan evangelist. Administering the Sacraments predominates in the work of the minister as priest.

This main function of the ministry in a certain period does not exclude all the other functions. But it orders all the functions of the ministry in a scale of importance, and directs each function to a chief, though still proximate, end (the salvation of souls from eternal punishment, or the cure of guilty souls through their apprehension of the love of God, or the reconciliation of God and man through sacrifice and sacrament and works of expiation).

b) *The Call to the Ministry*: Again four elements are general in the call to the ministry: (i) the call to be a Christian, (ii) the sacred

call for the ministry, (iii) the providential call (talents, etc.), and (iv) the ecclesiastical call. But the idea of the ministry varies as these four calls are related to one another in varying orders of importance and modes of relationships.

c) *The Minister's Authority* : We are not dealing here with the ultimate authority (the minister as "a man of God"), nor with any incidental authority (close union between Church and state, or the authority of the minister as the intellectual leader).

The immediate authority of ministers generally derives from (i) the Church, either as representatives of churchly institutions (institutional authority) or as spokesmen of the Church as community (communal authority); (ii) from Scripture, and (iii) from authority of the witness. Here again every definite concept of the ministry lays special stress on a particular source of authority.

d) *The Idea of the People* : Is the minister primarily sent to the people of the Church or to those of the world? And what is the nature and fundamental need of the people whom the ministry serves?

Periods with a definite conception of the ministry had answers to these questions, while in our time there is confusion, not only with regard to the idea of the people, but also with regard to the work, the call, and the authority of the minister. Yet the confusion is lifting somewhat.

### III. *The Pastoral Director*

The emerging new idea of the ministry can be labelled — for want of a better phrase — as the conception of the minister as a pastoral director.

The meaning of the term is indicated indirectly by the character of modern church architecture. The many rooms of the parish house or religious education building are designed for a great number of meetings besides those of Sunday school classes and official boards. But the manifoldness is not unorganized: the focal centre is the place of worship and instruction.

A second indirect indication of the meaning of the term "pastoral director" is its perverse form, the "big operator". He represents a perversion of the minister's office, not because he is an executive but because he does not administer the *Church's* work.

The historical antecedent of the pastoral director is the bishop of the ancient Church (a man elected to oversee a single local church).

a) *The Work of the Pastoral Director* : He carries on all the traditional functions of the ministry. But his first function is that



of building or "edifying" the Church. Preaching is pastoral preaching directed towards the instruction, the persuasion, and counselling of Christians. Leading the "royal priesthood" of the whole Church in worship becomes more important for this pastoral director than it had been for the preacher. As a pastoral counsellor he calls into service the aid of many other men and agencies and, very frequently, he is a counsellor of counsellors. As a teacher he becomes a teacher of teachers. But the work that lays the greatest claim to his time and thought is the care of a church, the administration of a community that is directed towards the whole purpose of the Church ; for the Church is becoming the minister and its "minister" is its servant, directing it in its service.

b) *The Call of the Pastoral Director* : As the conception of the work of the ministry changes into the idea of the whole Church ministering, so the conception of call changes into the idea of the called and the calling Church. The Church calls someone on the basis of its understanding of his Christian and providential calling.

c) *The Authority of the Pastoral Director* : The communal authority becomes of greatest importance. This is most evident in connection with the pastoral director's scriptural, teaching authority : the people of God and the Book are closely associated ; therefore the minister only represents the authority of Scriptures if he is interpreting the mind of the community-before-God.

This communal authority does not mean, however, that the minister has to represent a fleeting majority of living and local church members ; he rather represents the great tradition of the Church : he speaks in contemporary language and to contemporary needs out of the long experience and painfully gathered wisdom of the Christian centuries.

Whether the minister's institutional authority in Protestantism is being re-established is still questionable. Surely, the institutional status and authority of the ministry are being modified in the direction of the democratic type of political, educational, and economic executive or managerial authority. But the question is whether the ministry will reflect these democratic forms of leadership with the difference that Christian faith and Church life require. Will the minister remain a "man of God" despite the fact that he is now a director instead of a ruler ?

d) *The People to Whom the Pastoral Director Is Sent* : First of all it is the people of the Church, but the Church is recognized to be the ministering community whose work is in the world. The pastoral director is neither a parish parson responsible for all the

people in a geographic area nor an abbot of a convent of the saved. He is the responsible leader of a parish church ; it is the church, not he in the first place, that has a parish and responsibility for it.

### Chapter 3. — THE IDEA OF A THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

#### I. *Seminaries in Quandary*

The first, superficial impression of theological schools in North America : an impression of uncertainty of purpose. The schools, like the churches and the ministers, have no clear conception of what they are doing.

#### II. *Signs of New Vitality*

Though no clear-cut idea of the theological school or of theology as a whole is as yet in prospect, a sense of renewal and promise, a feeling of excitement about the theological task, is to be felt in the academic climate.

Examples are the most remarkable renewal of the study of the Old Testament, a similar development of New Testament studies, the great interest in the Church and its relation to culture, and the great willingness to enter into conversation with secular society.

Other symptoms are the increased interest in the common worship of the academic community, and the experiments to relate the work of the seminary more intimately to the work of the local churches.

#### III. *The Character and Purpose of a Theological School*

The theological school is the intellectual centre of the Church's life. This centre is not the Church in its wholeness, not even the intellect of the Church ; but as an intellectual centre it is a member of the body, and its causes are identical with those of the Church.

The theological school has a double function (both "pure" and "applied science" are pursued) : (i) It is the place or occasion where the Church exercises its intellectual love of God and neighbour. Here theology is that response of man's nascent love towards God and neighbour which seeks to *know* the beloved. That does not mean that thinking itself is made worship, but that such thinking is truly worshipful. (ii) The theological school is the community that serves the Church's other activities by bringing reflection and criticism to bear on worship, preaching, teaching, and the care of souls. A future pastoral director of the Church needs to know the

meaning and relations of all the Church's activities. He has to understand the world of God in which the Church operates and the operations of the Church in that world.

#### IV. *The Theological Community*

The theological school necessarily has the form of a college, a "collegium" or colleagueship. It works through communication among the three — the teacher, the student, and the common object (= God and man in their interrelations). The infinitely active and inexhaustible nature of the subjects of theology reduces to relatively small significance the distance between teacher and student, between the more and the less mature members of the community of inquiry.

Theological study reveals its character as an affair of genuine back-and-forth communication also in the course of study: biblical studies are in essence participation in the life of the biblical communities that found their source and their focus in God. A similar thing is true with regard to the study of Christian history: it is a conversation with a large company of similarly concerned and experienced men.

The principle of communication applies also to the relations of the theological school to other groups and activities in the contemporary Church as well as in the contemporary world. As a centre of the Church's intellectual activity, the theological school is directly responsible for continuous conversation with the intellectual centres of secular society.

#### V. *Theory and Practice*

The idea of a theological school, as described in this chapter, emphasizes the theoretical character of its work.

Both a pragmatic understanding and an intellectualist understanding of the relations of theory and practice are to be rejected. Reflection has to precede, accompany, and follow action; this does not make it the source or end of action.

The theoretical work of the intellect needs therefore to be carried on in the context of the Church's whole life. This is especially important because it is inherent to theoretical activity to make I-It-relationships out of I-Thou-relationships. Because intellectual work requires such attention to the impersonal, therefore it is necessary that it be constantly corrected and made serviceable by church activities of another sort, especially by the worship of God, the hearing of His Word, and direct service of the neighbour.

## B. SOME CRITICAL COMMENTS

It has been said that H. Richard Niebuhr's book is not radical enough; I would agree with this criticism, if Professor Niebuhr were giving his own personal views and ideas about what the conception of the ministry *should* be; but he is trying to express the ideas of Church, ministry, and theological education which seem to be developing in the climate of North American opinion. And if his analysis of the developing trends is correct, we can be thankful for some of those recorded.

The fundamental polarity between Church and world is recognized (p. 26 f.), and the Church's responsibility in and for the world is clearly expressed. It is also recognized that this responsibility cannot be carried out by one man, but only by the whole Church, the "ministering community whose work is in the world". "It is the Church, not he (the pastor) in the first place, that has a parish and responsibility for it" (p. 91). "For the Church is becoming the minister and its 'minister' is the servant, directing it in its service" (p. 83). The main function of the pastor is therefore that "of building or edifying the Church" (p. 82). To put it in other terms: the Church's task is the "sharing of Christ's ministry in the world". This task can only be fulfilled by the *whole* people of God, and mainly by those who earn their livelihood in a secular job, and who therefore spend most of their working hours in a "worldly" occupation — the laity. But the laity needs to be prepared and sustained for, and in, its task in the world. This is the special calling of "the inner ministries of the Church".

This last sentence indicates my main criticism of the trends as described by Professor Niebuhr. He concentrates almost the whole burden of the "inner ministries" of the Church on one man, the "pastoral director" (which, of course, is a most unfortunate term, especially for European ears!). In so doing he confirms an analysis recently made by Albert Terrill Rasmussen, who speaks about "the growing gap between clergy and laity" in North America because of the "heavily professionalized type of leadership". This gap results in a one-man Church, where the leadership of the laymen in the Church "has tended to become less and less religious and more and more administrative and financial", and where "laymen see themselves as churchly custodians rather than as active witnesses for Christ and Christian faith in their own affairs" <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Social Ethics*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood, 1956, p. 113 ff.



I believe that the American-Niebuhrian "pastoral director" is a fiction. As soon as the ministry of the people of God in the world is re-established, we are forced to re-establish also the biblical diversity of the ministries within the Church. And when we do so, we can no more confine ourselves to the theologically trained and the professional ministers, but have to envisage a teamwork of theologians, pastors, Christian educators, and church administrators. This poses some radical questions about ordination (Is ordination only for those who administer the Sacraments, or for all who work for the edification of a ministering and witnessing community? And what about the ordination of those who share Christ's ministry in the world very especially? Is confirmation the ordination of the laity?), and the structure of the Church (Is the only right structure of the Church the local parish or the gathered congregation? What about regional centres and mobile ministries?).

I wonder whether the picture presented by Prof. Niebuhr is not distorted by the fact that he speaks only about the ordained, professional, academically trained ministry. For, in fact, there seems to me to be a remarkable opportunity for the above-mentioned teamwork in North America. Laymen and laywomen in North America, more than anywhere else in the world, are now ready to take up voluntary and professional ministries within the Church, and there are many opportunities to train such men and women. This readiness should not be repudiated. Learning from the experience of the Church of the first Christian centuries, from the still existing diversity of ministries within the Orthodox churches, and from the present-day concern and experiments with regard to the ministry within the younger churches, we should endeavour also in the European and American churches to find the diversity of inner ministries which is able to build up, in the modern industrial world, a ministering, redeemed, and redeeming community.

## **A Report on the Situation in the German Democratic Republic**

### *Background*

A year ago the policy of relaxation of tension, known as the policy of co-existence, was playing an important role in international relations. Against this background of political co-existence, the situation in the D.D.R. was marked by relatively strong tension between the church and the state. This tension was slightly reduced

by the Twentieth Party Congress in Moscow, which inaugurated the program of de-Stalinization. This meant for the church in the D.D.R. that it never made the "Declaration of Loyalty" that had been required by the government. The state, on the other hand, refrained from bringing pressure to bear on the church to force such a declaration. The situation was characterized by the continued presence of Walter Ulbricht, but, at the same time, by a definite amelioration of the life of the population. The slogan for this improvement was "democratization". On the occasion of a rather dramatic reception for the church leaders, given some time before the Party Congress, Mr. Mahron, Minister of the Interior, used sharp words and accusations against them, and threatened a "solution by force" of the "church-state" problem. However, neither force nor solution followed. A big party conference held somewhat later in the East was already overshadowed by the Moscow meeting which took place shortly after.

### *Events in the church*

The summer of 1956 was marked by two events in the life of the church which did not improve the relationship between church and state.

(a) In June an extraordinary meeting of the synod of the EKid (Evangelical Church in Germany) took place under the theme "The Realm of the Gospel in East and West". This meeting closed on a hopeful note regarding the principles of the relationship between church and state. It was also decided that church leaders should intervene in Bonn and Pankow against the introduction of compulsory military service and the exercising of pressure on youth in its favour. One week before the meeting of the synod Pankow had renounced compulsory military service and announced a reduction of the people's army from 120,000 to 90,000 men. At the meeting itself, signatures were collected to support church leaders in their intervention. However, not all members of the synod took part in this collection, since only a fraction of the total membership had initiated this action, while the other group had not even received word that such a step was to be taken. This was bound to arouse representatives of the second group, among them the director of the Evangelical Academy at Bad Boll, who, on the occasion of a CDU meeting in Bonn, strongly opposed the signature campaign.

(b) The Frankfurt Kirchentag established temporary peace between the two synodic parties. However, the two D.D.R. ministers present, Mr. Dieckmann and Mr. Nuschke, were refused recognition ;

neither of them was admitted to a state reception given by the government of Hesse. In addition, Mr. Nuschke was bluntly challenged in the commission on political questions by a West Berlin visitor to the Kirchentag. The leader of this commission gave the minister three minutes to speak, like any other participant in the discussion. However, no-one was able to formulate clearly his opinion in so short a time — including Mr. Nuschke. His reaction was to leave the commission in protest.

I have said that these two incidents did not contribute to an improvement of the relationship between church and state. The state realized, at this point, that the church was not facing it with a united front, but was split into many groups with divergent opinions. Its lack of respect for this church was reflected in subsequent measures, especially of a financial nature, which continue to complicate the situation of the church in the D.D.R.

### *Reactions to events in Hungary and Egypt*

When the people in the D.D.R. got word of the revolution in Hungary, they were stunned with surprise and anticipation. When the attack on Israel and the Franco-British intervention in Egypt followed, the prevailing feeling was one of helpless indignation. Irrespective of whether there is any connection between events in Hungary and Egypt, whether the Russians were prompted or encouraged by what happened in Egypt, it is a fact that by its intervention there the West forfeited the possibility of coming effectively to the aid of Hungary. On November 5, when Soviet intervention in Hungary was announced, I had a conversation with a D.D.R. woman student who said: "I had taken peace for granted and forgotten that war was the normal destiny of my generation."

In the West the indignation of the people and the (partly controlled) demonstrations were directed against the Soviet Union. In the East the indignation of the people and the (partly controlled) demonstrations were directed against France and England. A general disappointment about the possibilities of the United Nations and the World Peace Council made itself appreciably felt in widespread resignation. It was apparent that we had cherished false hopes. The church also was far from rejoicing over the failure of secular, political hopes — saying, "We know that all men are sinners, politicians included" — but felt saddened and humiliated. It was a time for recognizing false hopes as such and for proclaiming our hope in Jesus Christ.

*Evaluating the situation*

Western voices generally tell us that the picture of the situation in Hungary is quite clear: Russian intervention is to be totally condemned. The situation in Egypt, however, runs their argument, is highly delicate, and a whole series of factors has to be considered from the point of view of politics and international law, before a final judgment can be passed on Israel, England, France, and Egypt. Voices from the other side become audible in a letter from Professor Hromadka in Czechoslovakia, who says that the situation in Egypt is quite clear and needs no further explanation, while events in Hungary are very difficult to evaluate.

What are *we* to say to this? An evaluation of the uprising of people lies beyond our possibilities. Categories like good and evil, just and unjust, wise and stupid are no longer adequate. A revolution in the life of a people is subject to the same laws as natural phenomena and can be compared to the act of giving birth. If it is possible to apply moral standards to the act of begetting, certainly that of applying birth is beyond such evaluation.

The role of Radio Free Europe has probably had detrimental effects on the overall situation in Hungary. Cardinal Mindszenty's intervention was also fatal. He demanded the foundation of a Christian party, the denouncing of the Warsaw Pact, and the withdrawal of Russian troops. This was certainly a violation of the treaty, for the Warsaw Pact was concluded for a twenty-five year period. No-one could expect the Russians to acquiesce in that. The second Russian intervention was therefore bound to follow, and is less to be deplored than the first. Personally, I am not in a position to describe the Russian action as excessively brutal. Civil wars are subject to laws different from those governing wars between nations; one never knows where the enemy is. Had the German SS been faced by a civil war like that which confronted the Russians in Hungary, their cleaning-up action would have been far more merciless and thorough. Hungarian factories continued to work for weeks; had the Russians dealt heavy, brutal blows, this would not have been possible.

We must refrain from oversimplifying the situation in both Egypt and Hungary. East and West have to call injustice injustice, force force, and murder murder. This, at least, is the responsibility of the church. Our sermons cannot be preached with the attitude of someone who, disregarding the beam in his own eye, is eager to point out the mote in his brother's. This was perhaps possible in France as it looked at Russia, or vice versa. But we found ourselves outside this. In addition, indignation does not become the



Germans very well. What happened in Hungary — and perhaps in Egypt as well — is due partly to the misery which Germany has brought on the world. To this day the world has not succeeded in overcoming the conditions of the post-Hitler period. Here lies our guilt, which we must never belittle.

*Reaction of the church in the D.D.R. to the Hungarian situation*

Before events in Hungary had reached their peak, the D.D.R. government had called on workers and students to form "workers' committees" for democratization. One group of pastors in the D.D.R. was of the opinion that workers and students, bearing in mind developments in Hungary, would be encouraged to put forward reasonable demands and to accept the offer of the state, thus contributing to a relaxation of tension. Another group of pastors held that at a time when the events of June 17 seemed to be recurring in such a ghastly way, the thing to do was to act with prudence, not to put forward any demands, but to keep the situation fluid. The thing to do and to proclaim, they said, was to thank God for a government which retained Walter Ulbricht — either out of fear or good judgment — since this was the only way to avoid new bloodshed. To thank God for our government is against all our natural instincts, and therefore such a proclamation seemed to us to be a particularly Christian one.

In light of the situation in Hungary and Egypt, the text of Luke 13 seemed most appropriate. Pilate mingles the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices in the temple. Christ tells those who report on Pilate's evil deed of the eighteen men from Jerusalem on whom the tower of Siloam fell. In both cases His demand is the same: "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." He then goes on to the parable of the fig tree. We are to interpret God's patience with us as a call to be grateful and to recognize His gift bestowed on us in our government. "Repentance" then comes to mean learning to be humble and grateful for the peace and order which we still enjoy.

*Financial situation of the Church*

I have said that the financial situation of the church has become difficult. This is due to the following factors.

The transfer of money to the D.D.R. under the *Bruderhilfe* scheme (aid from West German churches) has now been completely stopped. Church taxes can no longer be collected from delinquent taxpayers through the revenue office. The door-to-door and street collections, which were permitted for two weeks four times a year,

have been reduced to three days. It still remains to be seen whether this three-day collection will be authorized four times or only twice a year. This, of course, endangers considerably the solvency of the church in the D.D.R. On December 5 a talk took place between Bishop Dibelius and Minister President Grotewohl, during which Grotewohl is reported to have offered a one million mark loan to the church. Such an offer, however, has to be seen against the background of the failure of the state to comply with its past obligation to pay indemnity to the church.

### *Russia*

Today, when the situation in the countries of the Eastern bloc is coloured by events in Hungary and Poland, the West would make a serious mistake if it paved the way for Russia to return to Stalinism. Now is not the time to become resigned and to point out that Russia is showing her true face. It is quite clear that we do not have any illusions about Russia's true face, but what matters now is that we negotiate with her irrespective of the kind of face she pleases to show. The burning issues of international relations today, the problem of Hungary and Poland, and the question of a divided Germany, can never be solved without, or in opposition to, but solely in cooperation with, Russia.

## **The Student Christian Movement in Italy**

GIORGIO BOUCHARD

The existence of a Student Christian Movement in Italy is justified by the presence of a tiny Protestant minority in this land which is virtually the "capital" of Catholicism. What is the religious situation in Italy today?

Officially, Italy is a ninety-nine per cent Catholic nation. But it is to be noted that since the end of the war there has been an increasing tendency to apply the sampling methods of research, conducted in more or less scientific fashion, to learn the real character of the religious feelings of Italians, which indicates a certain uneasiness on the part of the heads of the church. And indeed, the results of these investigations have shown a remarkable decline in religious sentiment in Italy. This crisis is symbolized by the decline in the number of those responding to the priestly vocation. One hundred years ago Italy had five priests for every thousand inhabitants; today, the

proportion has dropped to 1.25 per thousand. Moreover, a very large number of priests are forsaking the priesthood. The Italian religious crisis naturally centres in the cities, where the forces of secularization bring all their power to bear, but the religious life is also dwindling in the countryside, which was formerly considered the stronghold of the church. A well-known priest, Don Bussi, wrote recently: "We need to bring about a radical re-evangelization of rural areas."

This situation is further aggravated by the current policy pursued by the Catholic Church. At the end of the war, the church hierarchy found itself facing the menace of a very powerful political left wing (communists and socialists, far more unified then than now) which appeared to have the possibility of taking over power, and it could not resist the temptation to declare a crusade (especially during the 1948 elections), a crusade intended not only to prevent a communist victory, but to initiate a veritable campaign of reconquest of the Italian state, of penetration by the ecclesiastical authorities into all domains of national life — industry, finance capital, civil service, cinema, newspapers, public assistance, schools, etc. This action had important results, so that one might say that today Italy has practically become "the state of the church", as was said by an unfrocked priest who has written a significant book on this problem.

But the disquieting aspect is that this purely worldly and political victory was possible only through the total mobilization of Catholic forces on the plane of political struggle, which is to say at the cost of a very great weakening of the truly spiritual influence of the clergy and of the church organizations. Thus, for the first time in Italian history, the priest ceased to be "the man for all people", and became the man of a party. And Catholic Action, which was founded to be an instrument of apostleship, is used almost exclusively as an instrument of struggle and domination. The present power of the church has imposed a high degree of religious conformity, but has not been able to renew the religious soul of the Italian people nor to prevent the falling off of religious practices.

A characteristic symptom of this, and one which is of vital interest to the Student Christian Movement, is the almost complete absence of a Catholic culture in Italy. For example, none of the great Italian writers of today can be considered "Catholic". There is, of course, a Catholic intellectual *élite*, but in general it is ignorant of theology (in the widest sense of the word) and, moreover, its productivity in the cultural realm is very limited, with the exception of a few younger people who are attempting to introduce into Italy the patterns of the best French Catholicism, and who deserve to be watched with all our sympathy.

Among university students, the great majority have absolutely no interest in religious questions. Of about 150,000 students, only 5,500 belong to the Federation of Catholic Universities. This is doubtless the result of the liberal era which preceded fascism, to which may be added now the Marxist influence. But apart from the Marxists, students are generally not anti-religious. The religious life simply seems to them to be of little importance (and, what is more, of little interest), something to which one may accord outward respect because of social pressure (and not always even then), but which one does not take seriously.

What will be the religious future of Italy and its intellectual classes? It is not prudent to make predictions, but we should like, nevertheless, to hazard a guess. It is indeed possible that the current Catholic effort to reconquer Italy may succeed definitively, and that the Catholic forces may maintain themselves in power for a fairly long period, imposing on Italy a massive religious conformism, as they realize their dream of a "Catholic society" — all of which would amount to reducing Italy to the level of Spain and Portugal. But unlike Spain and Portugal, Italy can be considered as an area of rapid social change. The south is in a state of ferment, industry is developing, the farm areas are becoming mechanized; in short, Italy is in process of becoming "Americanized" (to a modest degree, of course). But in the face of this evolution, which is not only economic but involves also a certain change in mentality, the effort to realize a corporate, totalitarian, Catholic society, modelled on the Middle Ages and achieved through a kind of new Counter-Reformation, seems to us to be doomed to failure sooner or later. It is possible that in a few years an anti-Catholic wave may spread through Italy, similar to that which overran France fifty years ago.

In this situation of present Catholic super-power and probable future de-Christianization of the country, exists the modest group of Italian Protestants. Today they make up about 0.3 per cent of the Italian population. One hundred years ago they were only 0.1 per cent. At that time, the only Protestants in Italy, apart from a handful of foreigners, were the Waldensians, shut off in a little corner of the Piedmontese Alps. But when Italy was unified under a fairly liberal regime, the Waldensians, the Methodist churches of England and America, the Baptists and other evangelical movements began a work of evangelization which bore fruit, even though of a necessarily modest sort in a country formed by centuries of Catholic tradition. Today, in all the important cities and in certain farming regions, there are Protestant churches. Recently there has been a great expansion of the extremist evangelical groups, especially the



Assembly of God, whose members are, moreover, the object of systematic persecution.

This young Italian Protestantism is thus obliged to remain vital and strong within, whether it be confronting Catholic pressures today, or facing the corrosive power of secularism tomorrow. For this reason it needs intellectuals (professors, engineers, etc.) who are well trained, and capable of rendering service within their churches at the same time as worthily representing Protestantism in the university and in their professional life.

It is towards this "Protestant formation" that the Student Christian Movement strives, all the more so as the Protestant population provides a significantly higher percentage of students and university people than the national average. The number of Protestant university professors is also far greater than the numerical importance of Protestants in the whole nation would lead one to expect.

But the goals of the Movement may perhaps best be brought out by giving some indication of its activities. Already before the first world war there existed in Italy a Christian Student Federation, headed by Professor Luzzi (the translator of the Bible). This was the liberal era, and many non-Protestant students participated in the Federation's activities. But with the rise to power of fascism, this activity became impossible. Only private groups of young Protestant intellectuals could keep alive (and these remained very much alive !). It was only after the end of the second world war that the *Movimento Cristiano Studenti* (MCS) could be reconstituted. Its organization was set up with a number of groups in the principal cities, linked together by a tiny publication.

These groups periodically brought together the Protestant students of the cities, and invited Catholics and atheists who might want to come. Especially in Genoa there were for several years some very fine meetings with Catholic students. But later the bishop of Genoa forbade Catholics to continue participating in these meetings, doubtless worried by the fact that some of the Catholic young people, having studied Protestant thought, had gone over to an evangelical church.

Several general assemblies of the Movement have been organized, in which the most important of our problems have been examined : the technical age, ecumenism, the history of Italian Protestantism, the Christian and art, modern architecture, etc. For a year the Movement published a magazine, *Presinza*, of a very high intellectual level. Unfortunately we had to discontinue its publication due to the high costs. When we can, we publish pamphlets to disseminate

Protestant thought. At the present time we have no journal of our own, but we have purchased a page in the newspaper of the Italian Protestant Youth (*Gioventu Evangelica*) published by the young Methodists, Baptists and Waldensians, where we publish the results of the work of our groups. Last year the Milan group did research on the youth movements of the various political parties, and the Turin group made a study of the university. We also give news of the Student Christian Movement throughout the world, and reviews of books that are important for the religious formation of the students. This coming year we shall publish, among other things, studies made by the Rome group (composed largely of the Waldensian and Methodist students of the Theological Faculty) on the development of the south of Italy. This is a question of vital importance, not only for the nation, but also for the evangelical churches, since it is in the south that the evangelical movements are having their greatest success today.

As is natural in the light of our tiny minority status, the members of the Movement are also engaged in church work, particularly in youth and interdenominational activities. This does not keep us from seeking contacts with other university students, and we sometimes join university groups, either to come to know the milieu or to witness to the "presence" of Protestants. Our greatest difficulty is due to the fact that, as part of a small minority, scattered in all four corners of Italy, our students are also dispersed in all the university cities. From this derives a certain instability and numerical weakness of the groups. That is why we have planned for the coming summer a "leadership training course", to take place at Agape, in which we propose to develop elements capable of insuring a greater stability to the groups, and of organizing others where none exist at present. But this project multiplies our already great financial difficulties, which are due to our small numbers, the distances which separate us, the cost of books needed for our groups, etc.

At any rate, we have decided to continue our modest work, whose aims can be summed up under two headings : (1) to aid the Protestant university people to deepen their Protestant faith, so they will not let themselves be absorbed by Catholic conformism or by the atmosphere of religious indifference which reigns in our universities, and so they may make their companions aware of the existence of the evangelical world and ecumenism, which are almost completely unknown in Italy ; (2) to give to the Italian evangelical churches a solid *élite*, which is alive to both the Italian situation as it really is, and to the ecumenical vision.

## WITH HUNGARIAN STUDENTS IN AUSTRIA

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(continued)

ALICE OTTERNESS

Monday was absorbed with more contacts in Vienna, the most interesting being that with the Roman Catholic student pastor and Pastor Dantine. Since such a large proportion of the students are Roman Catholic, we decided that our efforts at social service among students were better carried on in cooperation with the Roman Catholic student group in Vienna. Their headquarters were one floor of a large building near the university, including a *mensa* or dining room where several hundred students ate each day. The Austrian population is approximately ninety-five per cent Roman Catholic, so naturally their effort in the university was a major one. On a bulletin board in the main university building I noticed a sign announcing that Gabriel Marcel, the French Roman Catholic existentialist philosopher, was giving an open lecture on "Faith as a Spiritual Dimension".

Before leaving on Tuesday afternoon I returned once more to the *Studentenheim*, where sixty more students had now been housed, and had a chance to say goodbye to those students we had come to know best. With the boy who had come to church on Sunday I left a small supply of Federation crosses. When some of his friends saw them they wanted them also, so I gave him a few more. This incident was repeated in each case when I distributed the crosses to one person, so that I hardly had enough for the whole trip. This same student was also very glad to receive a New Testament, even though it was in German. Later we were able to get a supply of Bibles from the Lutheran World Federation and the headquarters of the Reformed Church in Austria.

At the *Studentenheim* I met Mr. Auer, a young Hungarian ski teacher from Graz, who had been in Austria since 1945. He was with Clive Gray, officer of the National Student Association in the United States, who had come a few days earlier from New York. They were planning to return to Graz, and then to make a trip by rented car to the student camps in that area. When Auer discovered that I was also going to Graz, he invited me to join them for the trip.

Many other experiences in Vienna were memorable, especially the several occasions when Pastor Dantine arranged to give me a touch of Vienna hospitality — coffee in a genuine Vienna coffee

house with *Torten* laden with whipped cream, Yugoslavian food at midnight in a special Yugoslavian restaurant, and *Abendbrot*, evening supper, at his home. Pastor Dantine combines intellectual strength with a love of life in a particularly charming way, and is held in great esteem and affection by all of the SCMerS.

My last little act in Vienna was buying a *Pfeffinger-Torte* to bring back to Inga Stauffer, our *chef-de-bureau*. This speciality, for which Vienna is famous, was the one thing she wanted from there. It was a pleasure when the man from whom I bought it entered into the festivities of the occasion, taking pride for Vienna in its contribution to culinary art and giving me a small piece to taste myself.

### Graz

Graz is a fascinating old city in the Steiermark district of Austria. Its narrow streets, old baroque churches, and a fortified hill overlooking the city carry one into another age of Austrian history. The university of about 4,000 is a technical university, and consequently there are large numbers of foreign students studying there, 500 from Greece and 300 from Norway. This presents a special challenge to the small SCM, and they were eager to hear of ways they could better carry on their work among them.

After I was met by the two *Vertrauenstudenten* and the SCM adviser, Ulli TrinkS, we went to my hotel, where I had supper and we talked together about the situation. Ulli will finish work for his advanced degree in medieval history in January, and will then become the first full-time secretary of the Austrian SCM. He is a German who came to Austria because his fiancée is there, and he knows the problems and tasks of the SCM well, and also the general situation in Austria in which the SCM is called to witness. He said, for instance, that one of the sociological problems in Austria is the alarming decrease in the birth-rate.

As we talked I realized how closely Austria is related to the world of Eastern Europe and the Slavic countries. One of the *Vertrauenstudenten* had spent a year studying the Slavic languages in Yugoslavia, and Ulli's fiancée had been there for a holiday a summer ago. In addition, the SCM was also interested in contacts with the Italian SCM, and has always offered free places at its own September camp for Italian students.

It became more and more clear that there are various unique opportunities for the Austrian SCM to render service to the Federation as a whole in these many areas, and the new General Secretary faces a very challenging job, since the internal work of the SCM also constitutes such a major task. It is our hope that the Federation



can make a substantial contribution to the salary of the General Secretary through our Mutual Assistance Program.

When I heard the Graz students greeting one another with the salutation, *Servus*, as well as the Austrian and Southern German phrase, *Grüss Gott*, I thought how interesting it would be to examine the origins of all the phrases we use when meeting one another. The old Latin *servus* — I am your servant — is used now only among children and very good friends and is an extremely casual greeting, but somehow the idea of greeting someone in the spirit of "I am your servant" or "I am at your service" sounded good to me.

The student body of Graz had responded to the emergency refugee situation with lightning speed, and had been the first to have a carload of supplies at the Hungarian border when the refugees began to arrive. They were carrying on a large relief effort among all ages of refugees, as well as special work among students themselves. A group of British students from Cambridge were working with them, operating an all-night soup kitchen at the border. One student, who had been at the Federation Annual Conference in Bièvres in 1955, now a doctor, had been giving medical services day and night for the last three weeks with almost no time off for sleeping. It was a surprise to meet him, and a double surprise when he had all of his pictures from Bièvres with which we could recall the names and faces of many who had been there. I was reminded of what Mauricio Lopez had said in his remarks of evaluation at the close of the General Committee last summer: that his primary impression of the General Committee was that it had been "profoundly human". This was also true of Bièvres — and hundreds of other SCM and Federation conferences.

### *Student camps*

We formed an interesting team as we climbed into the little car (with a heater that didn't work) for our trip to camps around Graz. The driver was an Austrian student, a good friend of the Hungarian ski teacher (also boxing champion!) whom I had met the previous day. They sat in the front seat and Clive Gray, Ulli Trinks, who took time off from his thesis work to make the trip, and I sat in the back. The ski teacher told us of his own flight to Austria by donkey in 1945, over the same hills we were travelling then. He also told of many contacts he had had since that time with communist youth through sporting events. Naturally he became our translator when we got to the camps, as it was indispensable to have someone who could speak Hungarian when we met with large groups of students.

We had hoped to visit three or four camps, but the distances were greater than we had counted on, and a snowy cold day for mountain driving slowed us up, so we visited only two. There were about twenty-five students in each camp, Semriach and Frohnleiten (the latter was a forester's cabin). All were men and boys, except for one girl who was with her fiancée at Semriach. They were hoping to be married soon, and Ulli arranged for a Roman Catholic priest to perform the ceremony. We heard later that the whole camp had attended the wedding the following Saturday.

Since Clive Gray brought special greetings from the American students, the Hungarians were eager to get information about opportunities to study in the States — would they have to go in the army, would their educational background be sufficient? Among the group almost all were technical students — engineering, chemistry, physics, electro-technics. It was a change, therefore, to discover one student who was studying music. In each camp students came to me and asked to have Bibles sent to them, and were pleased to have the little Federation crosses. It is difficult to interpret what their expression of interest indicated, since few of them had been going to church, and none whom I met had any information about the former SCM. It seemed to me that they were eager to identify themselves in some way with the Christian Church, since they had probably come from Christian homes, and the tangible reality of a Bible or a small cross was one way to do this.

When we arrived back later that night we went to the room where the *Studentengemeinde* was having its Wednesday evening Bible study. About thirty students were there and eager to have news of our day's excursion. That same morning I had joined a smaller group for a prayer circle before morning classes. The *Studentengemeinde* was in the midst of plans for repainting its meeting room, so decided to invite some of the Hungarian students located in Graz to help them. A small delegation went the next afternoon to visit a Boy Scout hut in Graz, where thirty refugee students were living. They were sleeping on straw mattresses, and as yet had no pocket money, so were in need of cigarettes and even postage stamps. The SCMer had taken a little offering at the Bible study the night before, so used that to help them. One SCMer also invited some students to his room the next afternoon to listen to records — both jazz and classical. We soon learned that all the Hungarian students were fond of jazz, and several mentioned Hemingway as their favorite modern author. His book, *The Old Man and the Sea*, was completely sold out in Hungarian book shops.

This group in the Boy Scout hut included one man, a bit older than the students, who had been working as a translator in Budapest. He spoke English, German, French, Hungarian, and Russian. He turned our question around by saying, "What can I do to help you?", and in the course of the discussion we decided that he should try to begin some English language courses for the students. The big need in all of the student camps was dictionaries and phrase books from Hungarian into other languages — French, German, and English — for all of these students who would be seeking to study in other countries would immediately have to learn the language.

Thursday also included a very nice walk through Graz with Ulli and his fiancée, tea at the home of the contact pastor, and a late evening party in one of the local restaurants with members of the SCM who had just come from *Kurrende* practice. A little carved wooden figure of a typical Steiermark character and a book of poetry of one of Austria's leading authors are remembrances from Graz that will bring back memories of these full days.

### *Aigen*

Each visit was taking more time than I had expected, so I changed my schedule slightly in order to have sufficient time for the camps where I was still to go. Friday I was scheduled to go to Aigen, a student camp related to the Graz student association, but supported by students from Cambridge, England. In order to keep the Graz SCM related to this camp too, I invited the *Vertrauensstudenten* to come with me, so he could report back to the SCM what the needs were. We left Graz by train at 7:30 a.m. (Ulli came down to say goodbye — certainly devotion beyond the call of duty!) and arrived at a station about six kilometres from Aigen about 10 o'clock, to find there was no bus for another hour and a half, and the afternoon train left at 2:30. So we decided to hitch-hike. But all the cars seemed to be going in the other direction, or else thought we looked either unsafe or perfectly capable of getting there under our own steam, for we walked the whole way. It was a very cold day, but beautiful, for we were in a little valley surrounded by snow-covered mountains, which tourists spend a great deal of money to see.

We finally got to the tiny village, and were directed to an old castle where the students were. Just coming down the path were two students — both looking very British in high-necked sweaters. One with an especially British accent and uncontrollable bright red curls turned out to be Austrian, but the other was one of the three British students there who had come originally to join in the fighting

in Hungary, and when that was impossible volunteered their efforts for relief work.

The camp was already running like a regular institution. A lecture on the British economic system was being given by a Hungarian advanced student who had once spent a year in Great Britain. Regular language classes were going on each day, and later I saw several students writing German or English grammar exercises. The pressing need was for an alarm clock for the one whose job it was to wake the others: the day was getting started too late to be fruitful. The fellows were even going out in the mountain air each morning to exercise! I left an old alarm clock of mine which was temporarily out of order and which I, with my unmechanical nature, couldn't fix any way, but which they could easily repair.

We were invited to stay for lunch. It was Friday and the leadership was proud that they had been able to get fish, so we sat down to plates piled high with potatoes and a good piece of fish. After our unsuccessful hitch-hiking, the food tasted very good.

The leaders told us that one of the first things the fellows has asked for was a priest, and they were now having services regularly in the village church near-by. There was no Protestant church in the community, but a Protestant pastor came about once a month. We said we would see if one of the Hungarian pastors could stop there. (There were already several Hungarian Protestant pastors at work in the various refugee camps — some who had just come from Hungary and others who had been in Austria for several years.)

The *Vertrauensstudent* brought back news to Graz of their special needs — a typewriter for filling out all of the registration forms which by this time had been printed and had reached the student camps. They had a radio and even a piano, but said that they would appreciate sixty girls! If this wasn't possible, they also wanted a few engineering drawing instruments, calculating books, and a mathematics professor.

The time was growing short, so the British fellows offered to give us a ride back to the station at our own risk. They had an old car they called "the tank", with which they had driven all the way to the Hungarian border. Its present condition betrayed the hard wear, for it had no brakes and the gear shift wasn't too dependable. We took the ride anyway and arrived safely at the train station. Harald took a train back to Graz, and I went on to St. Wolfgang.

### *St. Wolfgang*

The last lap of my trip to St. Wolfgang was by boat, across a little lake to this charming old town which is famous for the wood



carved altar in the local church, and as a summer resort. The trip to the student camp was again by foot, several kilometres around the lake to a striking, large yellow building which was an adult education centre of the Austrian government. The three hundred students whom we had read about in so many newspaper reports, and who had been ten days ago in the processing camp at Traiskirchen, were all located here. They had come as a body from Sopron University, together with thirty-two of their teachers and professors, and their hope had been to stay together and maintain a regular university. Many forces militated against this idea, however: first of all, they were almost exclusively forestry and mining students, professions which are needed in only small numbers in Austria; secondly, if they continued their education in Hungarian, it would not fit them for jobs either in Austria or other parts of Europe. In the camp itself it had been difficult to continue classes, as they had hoped to do, for there was only one room adaptable for class use. Even so, they were trying to have language lessons and a few other lectures in forestry and mining.

The students, as in the other camps I visited, had already elected student officers, and these students were at work at a desk in the main lobby. They were exploring scholarship possibilities, compiling records about the students, and that morning they were sending a delegation of students to visit their fellow students who were interned in Salzburg because they had come across the border under arms. When the Austrian leader of the camp and the student leaders learned about the WSCF, they offered to call a meeting of Protestant students for later that afternoon. I suggested they mention that I was Protestant, but that the meeting was open for any who wanted to come.

Then the Austrian leader (this particular camp was under the direct responsibility of the Austrian government) took me in his car fifteen kilometres to the building where the professors were with their families. The great distance between students and professors had also been a difficulty in keeping the classes going. Here I experienced the most moving part of my trip, for these young couples with small children (there were forty children in the camp under fourteen years) seemed to be facing problems more complex and discouraging than the individual students who had only themselves to care for. I have recorded elsewhere<sup>1</sup> my impression that students have a capacity for adjustment to new and changing circumstances, which is quite different from that of people who have had a developing

<sup>1</sup> See *Federation News*, March-April 1957.

profession disrupted at the same time as they have all the responsibilities of a family. The children were captivating with their bright smiles, however, and the sense of comradeship among the families and the loyalty of one family towards another was very evident. One group was particularly hospitable to me — I had come with the name of one of the men, since a journalist friend had met him earlier at Traiskirchen and knew he was a Protestant. These three couples very much hoped to go to Canada together. Once again I was invited for lunch, and had a big bowl of soup and another Austrian dish which was very filling but whose contents were quite mysterious. The couples were afraid I hadn't had enough to eat, so in the room which was home for one family they spread several slices of bread with butter and *Leberwurst* for me. The day before they had received a little pocket money, and had bought this fresh bread to have in their own "home".

The Protestant teacher, really an adjunct, retold some of the problems which they had been facing in the universities in Hungary : with so much emphasis on teaching Russian and Marxism in the university there was little time left for the main subject matter, and consequently the standards were continually getting lower. He knew something of small SCM meetings back in 1947 and 1948, and also remembered very vividly a visit from Karl Barth in 1949.

Much of our talking was done as he stood waiting with me for the bus back to the student camp. When it came, however, it passed us completely (we were evidently at the wrong stop), so we resorted to hitch-hiking again — this time more successfully — and he flagged a truck-driver who gave me a ride.

It has been good to hear since that time that several professors and students have gone to British Columbia in Canada, where they are staying together in a university.

Back at the student camp a group of fifty gathered for the meeting. Most were Protestants, but not all. For the first time there was a large group of girls — there were sixty in the camp. I told them about the other student camps in Austria, a bit about SCMs around the world and the WSCF, assured them of the prayers and material help of Christian students throughout the world, and then we spent another hour in questions and discussion. They wanted to know more about scholarship opportunities, as well as many other things about Western literature, movies, and music. Twenty students requested Bibles, and the Federation crosses went quickly. I stayed for supper in a large mess hall, where we had hot soup with good chunks of ham and potatoes, as jazz blared out of the one radio which the camp owned. A very fine Benedictine professor who

had recently come from Hungary was eating near me, and we got acquainted. He was living with the students, holding worship, and also travelling to other refugee camps in the area. He knew the Protestant Hungarian pastor, Pastor Nagy, from Salzburg, and said he had been to the camp once already, and was coming back the next Monday for a service of Holy Communion.

In town that day I had bought a few candles, thinking of the approaching Advent season, and after supper when I gave them to one of the girls who had asked for a Bible she was radiant with joy. Her immediate thought was to make an Advent wreath, something she said they had had at home many years before. She was also very glad to receive the little *Losungen* book, the book of daily Bible readings used in Germany, and said her family in Hungary had always used one too. She quickly told one of her girl friends that they must go out and get some evergreen so they could make a wreath for the lobby of the building.

After visiting the big dormitory room where the girls all lived together (they told me of the tragedy which had taken place a week earlier when one of the girls was killed climbing in the near-by mountains), I was ready to start back to town. Some fellows offered to walk with me, after one of them had finished a game of bridge. This is a popular card game in Hungary, and was occupying some of their leisure time now. I joined them for one hand, bidding with my fingers and getting lessons in counting in Hungarian.

We had a cup of coffee together in town before they walked back, and they too told of having been in the fighting before they finally left Hungary. Most of the students were also involved in the original student demonstrations which were held simultaneously at Sopron and Budapest back on October 23, but which had not been in anticipation of such far-reaching consequences.

Sunday morning I crossed the lake again and arrived in Salzburg on the *Kleinbahn*, a special "Toonerville Trolley" kind of train that runs in the Salzkammergut region of Austria. Since I had some time before the train left for Innsbruck, I took a taxi to Sitzenheim, the Austrian army camp where the 200 Sopron students were interned. Without realizing at the time, I came into the office of the head man just as the Protestant pastor, Pastor Nagy, was leaving after having held services there. The procedures of international law governing the treatment of these students, who were not in the Hungarian army but had crossed the border with help from soldiers and under arms, were apt to move slowly, the camp leader said. He did not know how long they would be there. He invited me to meet with some of the student leaders during this short time,

so I sat in a broken-down chair in a room with no other furniture while they described how unfortunate it was that this additional complication had been added to their other problems. Some of them had fiancées among the girls at St. Wolfgang. News came later in December that the students had been released and allowed to go to St. Wolfgang.

The YMCA and YWCA were working jointly in both Sitzenheim and St. Wolfgang. We also contacted the *Studentengemeinde* in Munich, Germany, not too far from this corner of Austria, and they went into immediate action to arrange Christmas gifts of books for these students. The other student camps were located near enough to be reached by members of the Austrian SCMs.

### *Innsbruck*

My last stop was Innsbruck. The schedule here was lighter than any place else, for there were not yet any refugee students there, and it was not the time of a regular SCM meeting.

The *Vertrauensstudent* and Helga Sauermann, student contact person with the Federation for the Austrian SCM, gave me a delightful tour of Innsbruck, the city where a large majority of students come to study because the skiing is so wonderful! And both Helga and Otto said that was one good reason why they were there! I even had time to have a permanent wave, much cheaper in Austria and hardly subject to Swiss customs inspection!

There are actually more non-Austrian students in the Innsbruck SCM than Austrian. One charming British girl spoke to me Monday evening when I was invited to go out to coffee with a group of the SCMs. Rather hesitantly she inquired, "Have you ever heard of the British SCM?" When I assured her that I had, she said she had been an SCM officer in Liverpool. She wanted to volunteer for work among refugees during the Christmas holidays and would not be going home.

The news had reached their SCM that morning through the *Hochschülerschaft* (student association) that 300 Hungarian students were arriving Monday, and that they should try to find rooms for them. The little SCM — only about 30 members — had made an announcement in the local congregation where they worshipped, but the housing problem in Innsbruck was already so acute it was very difficult. When we talked with the local pastor again Monday afternoon (news had since come that the students wouldn't be arriving until Thursday), we decided to get in contact with the Roman Catholic *Hochschulgemeinde* to try to work with them on finding rooms.



The girl who answered the phone at their headquarters when Helga called was very willing to try to do something together about it, but was a bit surprised by the idea, for she said, "I thought the *Hochschülerschaft* was doing that". It was then that Helga spoke some classic words, "But who is the *Hochschülerschaft*? We are." And I think this is one of the big lessons the Austrian SCM is learning for all of us from this experience. Even though they are a small group in each university, this does not mean they should set themselves apart from the university with either an inferiority complex or a "holier than thou" attitude. They *are* the university, and when the student associations rise up to carry on relief efforts in such a splendid way, the SCMs belong with them, together with their other fellow Christians as much as possible. It is only when we are doing this that we are also welcome to go the second mile, and can serve in a spiritual ministry as well.

I do not know whether they were successful in finding places to live for these 300 students. In a sense the experiences of that ten days more than a month ago now seem very far away, and one can too easily forget. But at times the faces of all those students keep returning to my mind; at such times prayer is a great gift. There is encouragement from many sides — a small amount of money has come in to the fund<sup>1</sup>; we know that the Austrian SCM and some *Studentengemeinden* in Germany helped to provide a Christmas for these students; we know that efforts by various people have resulted in supplies of Hungarian books, as well as language books, reaching the students; we know that several SCMs have provided scholarships for students, and in some cases already have these students in their midst.

I said *visont-latasta* (goodbye in Hungarian) to Austria to return to Geneva by train on November 27 (leaving Innsbruck at 6:30 a.m.). The experiences were swimming in my head, and I found relaxation reading a paper-back novel I had bought at a train station in Vienna.

It had been a wonderful opportunity, extremely difficult at a time when the world political scene was in such chaos, but rich with new friendships both among Hungarian students and among fellow workers in the Austrian SCM.

<sup>1</sup> To help the Austrian SCM in its special spiritual responsibility among Hungarian refugee students, and also to provide a budget for a small conference for these students in Austria this summer, a fund has been established in Geneva. Contributions are welcome, but this is not meant to take the place of giving to WUS and church relief agencies.

## EUROPEAN TRAVEL DIARY

PARKER ROSSMAN

(continued)

### GERMANY

#### *June*

So that I would not have to carry luggage during those three weeks in Germany, I wore a nylon suit that could be washed without needing an ironing. However, I didn't count on the rain and so much splashed mud. Several days I had to wear my trousers before they were dry. The *Studentengemeinden* in Germany sit patiently through two-hour-long lectures, with only a ten-minute break. Many of our American student groups limit their meetings to an hour in length, so that students can return to their studies at an early hour — and with the idea that students will be anxious to return to the next meeting if the session closes at the peak of interest.

At Köln, the *Studentengemeinde* was preparing to leave on a four-day hike. They were going thirty kilometres during what they called "free wandering time". Not quite the same as the annual eighty-kilometre pilgrimage of the Roman Catholic students from Paris to Chartres and its magnificent cathedral.

These German student centres are sometimes miles from university buildings, as at Hannover. Where American students complain about walking a quarter of a mile to an SCM meeting, German students live all over the city, and do not hesitate to walk a visitor and his baggage two miles to save a tram fare.

The regional *Studentengemeinde* conference which I attended at the youth hostel in Speyer was very similar to our state "week-end" conferences. The theme was "Authority": should one support the state, because all authority comes from God? The program centred around discussion of the "cost of freedom" and such practical matters as the kind of army Germany should have — professional, general draft, militia as in Switzerland. This conference did not have workshops, as we do, on enlistment, worship, program; but several hours were spent hearing reports of programs and activities of the various groups. The free time was spent in singing, and they sang most beautifully, rehearsing chorals rather than "fun songs".

Perhaps the most interesting conference I attended in Europe was the meeting at Hannover of thirty students from the *Studentengemeinde*, thirty from the *Korporationen* (fraternities), and thirty from student government, to discuss the revival of the *Korporationen* and their relation to religious groups. The rector of the university and a number of prominent professors attended.

The conference began with a panel on "Problems of Student Life and Work". The president of the student parliament said that the main problems of German students today are: money, faculty-student relations, academic freedom, social responsibility of students. The *Korporation* speaker defined their aims as "friendship" and "education", the latter made possible because they could discipline members. After the *Studentengemeinde* defined its Christian purpose, a fourth student spoke for those students, a large number in Germany today, who want to stress extreme individualism and freedom by not belonging to anything.

Perhaps I should say that many are stunned by the present strong revival of the *Korporationen*, which by and large are politically conservative and nationalistic. They often stress the values of the aristocratic society in manners, job preference for members, etc. A few are now building houses like American fraternities, but this has not been very successful. The "pledge" system is interesting. Meetings are publicly announced, and new students who want to join merely start attending. Persons not wanted as members are then politely asked to stop coming. *Korporationen* usually have a business meeting on Monday night, a social meeting on Friday night, and theoretically a cultural meeting on a third night each week. They confess that intellectual and cultural interests are diminishing.

The *Korporationen* have revived their old fencing system — it is not regular fencing, but rather a ceremonial play with sharp sabres. They actually compared it to certain Japanese ceremonies. In the chapters, the men practice with wooden sabres. The actual duels are between *Korporationen*, when they meet in beer halls. The new members, who have not yet proven themselves, stand perfectly still and endure forty slashes. There is no winning or losing, except that a man is disgraced if he flinches. The alumni provide the expensive sabres and protective clothing, which costs thousands of marks. Belonging to a *Korporation* actually costs as little as a dollar a month. The men who duel are afterwards expected to become close friends. The marks of the old *Korporation* member are fencing scars on the face. A friend of mine at Mainz, a young businessman, says that every time he sees a young student with fresh scars on his face he wants to sit down and cry for Germany.

One issue in the conference was, "How about women?" There are no women's *Korporationen* in Germany, and one of the non-fencing *Korporationen* is proposing to admit women members. The SCM charged that the *Korporationen* often become substitutes for the church. *Korporationen* become "sects", in that they start with their own purposes rather than with God's purpose. One goes to a "sect" to receive services, rather than going to serve one's fellow men. It was countered that the SCM was wrong in self-righteously standing apart from the *Korporationen* to criticize. *Korporation* members said SCM members need to come into the *Korporationen* and make their witness inside. The *Korporationen* were not willing to accept the charge of nationalism and conservatism. They said the *Korporationen* could grow and change with the needs of the university in a new Germany. This led to a debate about the extent to which conservative alumni control the *Korporationen*.

My translators gave up translating for me when the discussions got difficult. I wonder, therefore, if this report of mine says any of the same things as an official report of the conference.

### July

What are our impressions after returning from Italy and Greece? Symbol of my feelings: a ten-year-old bar boy delivering drinks at a time when he should have been in school. We saw him furtively stick his fingers into the cup of coffee he was delivering, and then lick them to see how it tasted. One wonders, after viewing the poverty in much of Southern Europe, if future generations will read reports of this poverty with the same incredulity with which we read about the branding of slaves. Dirt, lethargy, ignorance, scars, degrading work, hovels, children who have never had a hot meal, homes with no facilities for cooking, water too expensive for washing, air too dusty for breathing. Today's newspapers tell of an atomic engine for a space ship. This represents the wealth, skill, and imagination that can end the cruel aspects of poverty. The bodies and souls of children are still for sale in Naples; only now the cruelty is more subtle, less personal. The "poor card" given to the unemployed entitles them to stand in line all day for enough food to keep them alive, but not enough food to keep them from being hungry, not enough to keep them well, not enough to give strength for work. The Congregational settlement house at Naples has an excellent volley-ball team, but it never wins a game. The teen-age boys don't have strength enough to play a full game. And these boys get some food at the settlement each evening.



Of course, these people are dirty because they are lazy, and lazy because of malnutrition, disease, and ignorance. Nine hours a week of school for a few years, and the children must drop out of school to take care of younger children so that parents can work. And without enough education to pass fifth grade examinations, what does a youngster hope for? That he will be lucky enough to get a job pulling a cart or carrying baggage — and that he will be strong and healthy enough to keep it. The children from the Methodist orphanage have no difficulty getting jobs and keeping them. They have had good food.

Another parable for all of us. The well-fed people of Naples have built a high stone wall to hide some of the worst slums — shacks built of rubble — so they cannot be seen. All of us are guilty of building walls of unconcern and forgetfulness, so that we can avoid remaining aware of poverty and suffering.

Today in Geneva the sun is bright and warm, the sky pure blue, the mountains simmering in a haze which means there won't be rain tomorrow. The *jet d'eau* is forming a small rainbow over the lake. As our plane neared Geneva last night, the first thing we could see was that huge fountain, lighted at night, standing like a shimmering needle of light miles away at the end of the sea of darkness that was Lac Lemman.

### *August*

The weather in Germany has been so rainy and cold this August. I left Geneva on August 1 for Mannheim, where the annual Federation conference was held in the university (fifty East Germans, fifty West Germans, one hundred overseas students). The university at Mannheim was pointed out as typical of Germany today: on the outside the old Mannheim palace, on the inside the most modernistic university facilities, in the back the as yet unrepaired bomb damage. Mannheim has one of the world's most unusual street-numbering systems; each block has a letter and a number, so your address might be, for example, 17A3.

I led a Bible study group along my typical democratic lines, and one German student came up later and said he was scandalized by my beginning the discussion by casually asking everyone what type of humour he liked — but that he was astonished to discover (1) that for the first time everyone spoke, and then nearly everyone shared in the Bible discussion, and (2) that the question, to his even greater surprise, was actually related to the passages!

One of the most interesting features of this conference was the showing of a motion picture from East Germany. Since they

could not take us on a visit, the D.D.R. students said they would bring us a sample communist film. It was "Ernest Thaelmann I", the first half of a biographical film of a communist leader in Germany in the 1920s, done in the "grand style". It was interesting to be reminded of the terrible days in Germany after World War I (the chaos which made Hitler possible) — the strikes, hunger-marches, the communist government in Saxony, etc. It was also interesting to see the communist version of these events. There was one wonderful scene — when the troops entered Hamburg to end the general strike, the workers threw pots and pans, furniture, etc. on them, from the third- and fourth-storey windows of flats on both sides of the narrow streets.

The Japanese delegation also showed a film at the General Committee entitled "It is Hard to Die", showing many of the hospitalized and other victims of the atomic bombs in Japan, and also the persons recently injured as a result of American atomic tests near Japan. We certainly cannot overemphasize the indignation of the Japanese that atomic test are conducted near their country, and the indignation of Asians in general that we conduct the tests at all.

### *The General Committee*

The General Committee at Tutzing has, in a way, turned out to be focussed on Africa rather than Latin America or Asia.

D. T. Niles, in a statement on the "holy living" report, said that, in his opinion, the ecumenical movement as represented by the World Council of Churches has largely been a conversation between two parties: (1) the "Catholic" party, which begins its thinking with the doctrine of the Church; (2) the "Protestant" (or Reformation) party, which starts with the "sovereignty of God". They have largely brushed aside the third great party of the Church, which begins at the point of Christian witness. The proposed merger of the International Missionary Council with the WCC would bring many from this "puritan party" into the conversation. One is reminded of what Lesslie Newbigin says about the ease with which we ignore the rapidly developing Pentecostal movements. We had been discussing how foreign one is led to feel in ecumenical circles if one does not smoke and drink; how little sympathy or Christian charity there is towards this "puritan" or pietistic view.

In the course of a dinner conversation, I was asked by several puzzled Europeans to explain my reasons for not smoking or drinking. I wonder who would agree with the reasons I gave:

1. *Community* discipline. Many of our puritan standards go back to the efforts of our spiritual grandparents to draw a line

between the members of the Church and of the world. How can we witness when there is no difference? Some, therefore, refrain from "frivolous" actions, even if they aren't tragically wrong, as a means of witness, so that one can recognize the "children of light" vis-à-vis the world. In a sense, this is a type of discipline set up and enforced by the community. The Free Church defines its barriers by asking members to do certain things and abstain from certain things. Just as a monk chooses to accept a discipline of a community that requires silence, so a free Christian may join a community that asks him to stay away from public dances, or not to drink or smoke.

2. *Personal discipline.* Each Christian (since it is not legislated) must define and follow out his own personal discipline — certain things he decides to do, certain things he does not do. The "hair shirt" may be spiritually valid for some and not for others. The Free Church person puts more emphasis upon self-denial (certainly with biblical precedents) and upon the "simple life", avoiding unnecessary pleasures and waste. Smoking and drinking, for example, may impress one as a needless waste of money for personal indulgence. One cannot, of course, legislate for others, but one's own discipline should be respected by others.

3. *Body discipline.* Every Christian agrees that the body is the "temple of God", and that he must be a good steward of his physical resources. In the American puritan's view, a large body of American opinion considers alcohol and tobacco harmful to health. Medical opinion hasn't final answers on this. Obviously, many Christians disagree on whether or not they are harmful. The European often says: "If it hasn't been proved unhealthy and I enjoy it, why not?" The puritan says: "Better abstain if there is some doubt."

We are sweating today with the financial needs of the Federation. The tremendous expansion of student work in Asia, Africa, and Latin America prompts leaders from these areas to press for regional travelling secretaries, for instance in Africa. But we must cut the program rather than expand it. There are one thousand Protestant student workers in the United States, five in Latin America south of the Rio Grande. I do not understand why the mission boards do not see the doors opening today in student work. Three years ago the Federation surveyed thirty-seven situations of opportunity; at this meeting we are pressured by over sixty.

There is an interesting discussion here on the weakness and over-professionalization of the ministry. Dick Shaull has pointed

out that in Brazil the churches with trained pastors are growing more slowly — probably because the boy who volunteers for the ministry is pulled out of the Christian community where he has a vital religious experience, and sent away to study in an intellectual community where his fellow students all have middle-class professional ambitions. Thus in most countries the pastor loses contact with working people. He also becomes spiritually impoverished, because he loses contact with his local congregation (he has only artificial relationships with the new one, which greets him as a pseudo-professional), and the seminary does not provide any genuine experience of Christian community. The typical seminary has no corporate discipline. It is a group of individuals each pursuing his own selfish ends, removed from vital contact with the Church, isolated from any vital contact with the bitter problems of the world. It is interesting that the college and university people here seem so reluctant to discuss this. Why are they so defensive?

### *October*

Now that we are on the “Queen Elizabeth” returning to America, we find that speaking about our experiences is like trying to summarize a dictionary. We have so many vivid impressions of the work of the churches in Europe: Sunday school in the Waldensian valleys of Italy; a school conference at Bièvres, with the young people spending their free time listening to *Peter and the Wolf*; a youth group writing and producing drama in a Lutheran church in the Montbéliard district of France; the CIMADE centre in the North African district of Marseille; dedicated deaconesses working with epileptic children in Berlin; chickens given by the World Council of Churches’ team to village families in Greece, near the Albanian border; an orphanage near the Austrian border in Switzerland; a youth rally in a mining village in Wales — imaginative projects, and overwhelming opportunity and need.

We hated to leave Geneva, for we were just learning where to look and what to see, what we needed to hear and how to listen. We are returning home with new convictions about the importance of the Federation and its member Movements, and especially with renewed esteem for the professors, pastors, and other adults who remain in the background, helping to make possible the effective functioning of the SCMs. These poorly supported adult leaders are the real unsung heroes from whom comes so much of what is creative in the richly creative life of the SCMs that we have seen in Europe!



## BOOK REVIEWS

### Books on Prayer <sup>1</sup>

OLIVE WYON

"We know today that, in a certain sense, the essence of religion is prayer... and indeed, that it is religion itself."<sup>2</sup> These words of Ménégos would be accepted by a great many students today, whether they are convinced Christians or not. The eagerness with which the subject is discussed in study groups, the readiness to learn more about it from those who "have got something" is very evident. In this country, the demand for books and pamphlets on prayer shows how widespread is the desire to "learn to pray", though not many books on prayer are written specifically for students.

Though many young students may not be aware of it, this widespread desire to "learn to pray" or to "pray better", shows very clearly the need for that basic theological and pastoral training which is necessary if "the laity" is to become an "apostolate". The importance of prayer in this connection is emphasized in a recent number of *The Student World*, where the writer says: "No action (of the laity) will have any value or effect if it is not sustained by an inner life of *contemplation*."<sup>3</sup>

Thoughtful students, however, soon find that in their group discussions they are often unable to see the wood for the trees; they have been so busy "discussing methods" of prayer, or even their own ideas about it, that they feel confused, and then they begin to realize that they must get down deeper and face fundamental questions, such as: (a) What are we trying to do? What is prayer after all? Does it make any difference whether we pray or not? (b) What do we believe about God?

When they get to this point they are ready to "learn to pray" in earnest. This was what Edward Wilson (of the Antarctic) discovered for himself while he was a medical student. During one long vacation he gave up praying altogether because "it seemed to be a useless waste of time". After a few weeks he realized that almost everything else seemed to be "a useless waste of time"<sup>4</sup>; so he began again, and we know the result.

<sup>1</sup> Books by Dr. WYON herself which are widely used, but which she has not mentioned, include *The School of Prayer*, *The Altar Fire*, and two booklets entitled *Praying for Unity*.

<sup>2</sup> F. MÉNÉGOZ, *Le problème de la prière*, 2nd ed. 1932, pp. 2, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ramon Sugranyes de Franch, *The Student World*, No. 3, 1956, p. 270.

<sup>4</sup> G. SEAVER, *The Faith of Edward Wilson of the Antarctic*, p. 16.

*Prayer begins with God*

The practice of prayer begins with God, not with ourselves. This means that prayer must be based on theology, or it will be vague and uncertain. P. T. Forsyth puts this plainly when he says: "To be religious is to pray... The theory of religion is really the philosophy of prayer; and the best theology is compressed prayer... It is in prayer that our real idea of God appears, and in prayer that our real relation to God shows itself... The greatest, truest, deepest thought of God is generated in prayer, where right thought has its essential condition in a right will."<sup>1</sup> These words come from a book entitled *The Soul of Prayer*. So far as I know, this book is not very well known, partly perhaps because its literary shape is peculiar. It consists of a number of papers and articles rather loosely strung together. It has no beginning and no end; yet each chapter contains profound and illuminating passages and sentences which stand out, and are worth reading over and over again. This book gives the impression that the writer is turning the torch of his powerful mind and heart upon various aspects of prayer, and showing them up in a new light. It is not a book for a beginner; it may not appeal to those who like logical order and a clear scheme; but for those who are willing to receive what Forsyth has to give, it is a gold-mine.

Nowhere is he more sure in his direction than in this stress upon the priority of God in prayer: "God... created the world at the first with a final and constant reference to the new creation, whose native speech is prayer. The whole creation thus comes home and finds itself in our prayer."<sup>2</sup> For "our communion with God rose, and it abides, in a crisis which shook not the earth only, but also heaven, in a tragedy and victory more vast, awful and pregnant than the greatest war in history could be"<sup>3</sup>. And this is so because "prayer is the atmosphere of revelation, in the strict and central sense of that word".

At the other end of the scale we find the same truth stated, very calmly and impressively, by Baron von Hügel in his essay on the *Life of Prayer*<sup>4</sup>, in which he maintains that "the positions concerning God, which require full and intelligent adoption in our life of prayer, are seven. The whole essay needs to be studied with care. One of the most thought-provoking sentences in this paper is the quiet statement that "God is God, already apart from His occupation

<sup>1</sup> P. T. Forsyth, *The Soul of Prayer*, 1949, pp. 44 and 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> *Essays and Addresses*, 2nd Series, pp. 217 ff.

with us". Towards the end of this paper he maintains that the "root-fact" and the "root-truth" of these "positions" is the prevenience of God: "The true inspirer of our most original-seeming thoughts and wishes... who secretly initiates what He openly crowns."

Thus both the Congregationalist and the Catholic unite in witnessing to this cardinal truth: that God initiates our prayer, that it is He who calls us to pray, and gives us the power to answer His call; for this is the purpose of life. On this Forsyth observes: "Prayer is often represented as the great *means* of the Christian life. But it is no mere means; it is the great *end* of that life."<sup>1</sup>

### *Books of instruction*

Thus all our prayer is response: inspired by the Holy Spirit and gathered up into the prayer of Christ. Like the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and many Catholic writers, Forsyth says: "The intercession of Christ in heaven is the continuity and consummation of His supreme work on earth. To share it is the meaning of praying in the Spirit."<sup>2</sup> So "we pray because we were made for prayer, and God draws us out by breathing Himself in"<sup>3</sup>.

Most books on prayer have some "gift" to impart, and their message is sure to reach someone. But some of them are rather uninspiring because they use conventional language, or presuppose living conditions which no longer exist, for example, privacy and "a room of one's own", and a fire already burning in "the study" where one can meditate in comfort, while someone else gets the breakfast! Others are unsatisfying because they are too individualistic, and ignore the significance of personal prayer as part of the "prayer of the Church", and others because they do not relate the practice of prayer to this theocentric foundation; when this happens prayer is regarded as a human undertaking which we must try to carry out as well as we can, looking, of course, in the end, to God for "help". It is no wonder that people who want to "pray better" are not greatly helped by such writers.

It is not easy to choose books of instruction out of the great number of valuable works which are continually being published. An interesting anthology appeared in 1954 under the title, *The Path of Prayer*<sup>4</sup>. It is an unusual anthology in some ways: the passages chosen are generally long and connected, so that it is easy to read, and to recollect what one has read. Its chief merit is that its message is a unity: all the extracts point away from ourselves to God, the source of all good. The compiler shows his own purpose in gathering

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 16. — <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. — <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *The Path of Prayer*, compiled by Osborne T. Miller.

these extracts from many diverse sources when he says: "We are in danger of becoming a race of what T. S. Eliot called 'decent godless folk'... We are becoming dead branches cut off from the Vine, with all its consequences of racial strife, social disease and individual illness. Unless we live the Eternal Life *now*, human achievement is worthless..."

For clear, practical instruction three books from very different ecclesiastical sources may be highly recommended. First of all, a deceptively simple little book by Dom Bernard Clements, *When Ye Pray*. It consists of five B.B.C. talks and has run into a great many editions. It covers a wide field, but there is nothing superficial about it. The writer was a well-known Anglican priest, and a member of a religious order, a great man, and the simplicity of his writing opens up wide vistas to those who are ready to learn. In addition to his deep experience, his writing contains flashes of humour.

*The Lower Levels of Prayer*, by Dr. George S. Stewart, has also had a long life, and is as fresh today as ever. The writer was a Presbyterian minister who had been a missionary in South Africa. His later years were spent as a professor in a theological college in Edinburgh. The value of this book — in addition to the evident reality of the writer's own experience — is its practical nature. As a minister in an industrial parish, he knew the difficulties of hard-working people, and he tried to help them where they were. His teaching is related to life, and to life on a level where privacy and time are hard to get. His guidance is invaluable for people who want to know "what to do" when they have secured time for prayer.

Another book of a general character is *Man, God, and Prayer*, by Fr. Hubert Northcott. The writer is a missionary in South Africa, a member of the Community of the Resurrection, and a friend of Fr. Huddleston. His book covers a wider field than those I have just mentioned. He places prayer in its setting: in relation to life as a whole, to the Christian doctrine of God and of man, to the Church, and to the world. Private and corporate prayer are thus seen in right proportion, and the dangers of an individualistic or sentimental piety are avoided. The writer gives valuable instruction upon the different "parts" of prayer, especially on meditation, the use of the Bible, and spiritual reading. In his closing chapter he explains the meaning of contemplation, and of the "Three Ways" in the spiritual life. This is a solid Anglican book, based on the Catholic tradition. It is a great deal more than a book "about prayer"; rather it might be described as a simple outline of pastoral theology, equally useful to "theologs" and lay folk. It is deep and wise; and its practical value is enhanced by the list of questions at the end of each chapter.



### *The devout life*

No list of books on prayer would be complete without that classic of devotional literature, *Introduction à la vie dévote*, by St. François de Sales (1609). For those who do not read French, it is good to know that we have a beautiful English translation, which was published in 1956<sup>1</sup>. The writer defines "true devotion" in his opening pages: "Real, living devotion presupposes the love of God... devotion is nothing else but that spiritual alertness and vivacity which enables us to co-operate with charity promptly and wholeheartedly." A person who has "devotion" is not a "creeping Christian", but is "like a man in sound health, who not only walks, but runs and leaps in the way of God's commandments, and beyond that in the path of heavenly inspirations". There is a great deal here about prayer and meditation, as well as about other aspects of the spiritual life. The historical significance of this book was that it took religion and "the devout life" out of the cloister into the world. Its charm and suavity of style should not blind us to the fact that, ultimately, the challenge of St. François de Sales is as absolute and uncompromising as that of any other great spiritual writer.

### *The Lord's Prayer*

In addition to these "general" works, a good deal has been written recently on our Lord's teaching on prayer, and on the Lord's Prayer in particular.<sup>2</sup> Here there is only room to mention three: the first is a modest but valuable small book, *The Lord's Prayer in the Bible*, by G. H. Moss, an Anglican parish priest. It is thoroughly biblical, and its practical teaching has been tested in the course of the writer's pastoral ministry. It is based on the fundamental conviction that "when we learn to pray as Christ has taught us, we are praying *with Him*". The second is *Abba*, by Evelyn Underhill. This too is outwardly a small book, but it is very rich in content. In fact, for most of us it will not reveal its full significance at a first reading. It is based on the view that the Lord's Prayer is "a complete description of what Christian prayer should be; ...for these seven clauses are seven lessons in prayer, forming together a complete direction for the conduct of our inner life". Certainly, under such guidance, the Prayer expands until we begin to see something of its vast significance. The third book on this subject is a massive volume: *Das Heilige Vaterunser: ein Werkbuch von*

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Devout Life by St. Francis de Sales*, translated by Michael Day.

<sup>2</sup> The Australian SCM has published a small booklet entitled *Dialogues on the Lord's Prayer*.

*Karl Becker und Maria Peter.* It comes from Freiburg im Breisgau and is a work of Catholic scholarship and devotion. It is intended to be used as a devotional book, and each chapter is followed by an anthology of extracts from spiritual writers from the earliest times down to the present day, including Protestant writers, for the book is full of the true "ecumenical" spirit. This book is a great gift to the Universal Church.

*Personal meditation and worship*

Finally, a great many books are of great assistance which do not come under the heading of "instruction" at all, for instance, the many volumes which are classified as "Spiritual Letters", from those of Fénelon and St. François de Sales down to Friedrich von Hügel and Dom John Chapman. The latter book is a great help to those who are being drawn into the way of contemplation. *La Prière de Toutes les Heures* by Pierre Charles S. J. is a wonderful collection of thoughtful "meditations" which help us to pray when we feel blank and empty. They can be used over and over again. A recent book, *Au Cœur des Masses*, by Père R. Viollaume, is full of deep teaching and inspiration for the life of prayer in the modern world; it has been written to guide the Little Brothers of Père de Foucauld. These small fraternities, scattered throughout the world, are endeavouring to lead lives of prayer in the midst of godlessness and poverty and hard work. The same ideal animates the Protestant communities of Grandchamp and Taizé. In English, *An Anthology of the Love of God*, compiled from the writings of Evelyn Underhill, forms a very inspiring book in itself, and would also lead those who do not know her work into a very fruitful field. In closing I would like to commend her great book on *Worship*, and in particular, in this connection, the chapter on "The Principles of Personal Worship". Here she says: "The praying Church is built of praying souls... and each great form of Christianity, Catholic and Orthodox, Evangelical and Quaker, has, in its own manner and according to its particular genius, been concerned to safeguard the importance of personal prayer, and to maintain a rightful balance between the corporate and individual life of worship." She points out that "the periods of Christian decadence have always been periods when this costly interior life of personal devotion has been dim. Revival has always come through persons for whom adoring and realistic attention to God and total self-giving to God's purpose have been the first interests of life". It is true, as she says, that such people have only become fully effective when associated with one another in some kind of group; "but the ultimate source of power has been the dedication of the individual heart."

## The Ferment of American Theology

### A Review Article

The Christian Faith Series. Reinhold Niebuhr, Consulting Editor.  
Doubleday and Co. Inc., New York, \$2.95 each volume; Victor  
Gollancz Ltd., London, 12/6 each volume.

*The Renewal of Man*, by Alexander Miller

*The Strangeness of the Church*, by Daniel T. Jenkins

*Doing the Truth*, by James A. Pike

*Hardness of Heart*, by Edmond Cherbonnier

*Man's Knowledge of God*, by William J. Wolf

The avowed purpose of this series, in which further volumes are to appear, is to present to the intelligent layman of today a cogent statement of some of the themes of the Christian faith which are relevant to, without being at home in, the world of secular values in which he lives. This purpose has two aspects. On the one side these volumes are intended to be popular, in the sense that they not indulge too much in the esoteric terminology of theologians themselves, and that the presentation of theology be illustrated by reference to human experience. On the other side, however, the intention is not in any sense to adapt theology to culture, but to present the full scandal of biblical faith with its claim on modern man, in confidence that "the present age, though incredulous toward the chief affirmations of this faith, is bound to find it more relevant than previous ages, which conceived their own schemes of salvation".

There is something typically American about the nature of this enterprise and the manner in which it is executed, although it is not wholly American, for two of the writers are British. It is not by far the full expression of American theology, for neither a liberalism which objects to scandal nor a fundamentalism which objects to social relevance is dead in the land. One might without overstatement call these books a minority attack on that growing mood of American culture-Christianity, that "fervent belief in a very vague religion" which spreads from the President down to the lowliest suburban home owner. But there is a sense in which these younger friends and students of Reinhold Niebuhr, following the tradition he founded, give an American form to the theological revival common to both sides of the Atlantic in the last thirty years. All of these men are firmly, sometimes belligerently, opposed to any starting point for

Christian thought which is not the problems and thought of men in this world. With the possible exception of the Britisher, Daniel Jenkins, they refuse to bring in any theological, Christological, or ecclesiological reference until the human need to which it speaks has been shown; and at this point their battle, not only with Karl Barth, but with "Continental" theology in general, continues. Yet on the other side all of these writers are concerned to present the fullness of Christian revelation, not merely as an answer to man's previous questions, but as a transformation of man. "The articulate self-consciousness of our generation begins to ask questions", writes Miller, "which scream for Christian answers. Yet the first comment out of the Christian complex of faith must be that the questions cannot be answered in the terms in which they are asked... For it is intrinsic to the Christian understanding of things that life and history do pose questions for which life and history do not provide the ingredients of a solution."

Thus the dialectical standpoint of these books. Heirs of Reinhold Niebuhr, they are also heirs of the problems his powerful influence has created. Niebuhr is by conviction not a professional theologian, even in the process of reintroducing biblical perspectives and a Christian understanding of man once more in a relevant form into American politics, society, and culture. For him the standpoint of the Christian making responsible decisions in a society whose foundations have not been destroyed, is the central point from which he surveys theology, politics, and philosophy; and though his sense of human sin and God's judgment on the absolute pretensions of human relative righteousness casts a shadow over the final validity of this standpoint, he is content to leave the questions of a new, theologically determined standpoint unresolved. For these men, however, expositors of Christian doctrine all, this question becomes more acute, and each wrestles with it in his own way, even as he also tries afresh to locate the problems of the world.

### *The Renewal of Man*

It is perhaps symptomatic of the basic trend of Niebuhr's thought that the most "Niebuhrian" of all these writers, Alexander Miller, digs below the social evils of our day to the distraught people who are their victims — the characters in Arthur Koestler, Graham Greene, and Robert Penn Warren — for his understanding of the human dilemma, and turns to the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith for his theological standpoint. Miller's existentialism is more thorough than Niebuhr's. The responsible though sinful pagan statesman or labour leader is replaced by the drunken figure of



Greene's Mexican priest, or the Koestler alternatives of Yogi and Commissar. His proclamation of man's justification is at the same time more absolute. There is no question for him of a dialectical tension between sin and grace to be resolved in the eschaton or in moments when grace breaks through. We live rather in the new reality of God's love for us in Christ, in spite of ourselves, and through which we are freed from ourselves, even the desire for our own salvation. But in both directions Miller is clearly developing Niebuhr's implications.

The same is true of this basis for ethics. All of the tension which Niebuhr requires in ethical decision is present for Miller. No choice is so good as not to need forgiveness. The Church as it is stands under strong judgment in the light of the Church as God intends it. Yet the fruits of faith for Miller are expressed in a flexible restatement of the two-realms doctrine. On the one side the Church is, nevertheless, by grace, that community bound together by an absolute loyalty to a saving God: "Here is the place where the power and the glory of God are seen, not in the Church's accomplishments, but in the face of Christ." Christian ethics is then the ethos of this community which differs from the world in knowing who its Lord is. On the other side the communities of the world are best understood in the positive significance, when they are recognized as "communities of law" which, in so far as they recognize their relativity and do not pretend to be instruments of salvation, are ordained of God. It becomes the work of Christian ethics, then, of love, to work for the best possible justice, which involves on the one hand opposing every fanaticism or illusory idealism, and on the other hand a continual concern with the technical problems of economics, politics, sociology, and psychology, which show us how to define justice in a given time and place. This is a secular task, "bound with the circle (*saeculum*) of what is possible for man". It is illumined and made urgent by man's justification, and the victory of God's grace.

All of this is good Reformation theology, and in some ways an improvement on Niebuhr. It makes sense further when Miller deduces some political consequences for America at the present time from it, and when he applies it to Christian vocation. The reader is therefore left with a puzzle: why is it not more exciting? Why does it lack the explosive quality of some of Niebuhr's books, where the political ethical tensions of modern man are left unresolved by doctrine? Why is one left with the feeling that the vivid human problems of Koestler, Greene, and Warren have been met by a formula for redemption rather than redemption itself? Is it,

perhaps — and the question is relevant to the other writers in this series as well — that Miller is reporting too much the dilemmas, the despair, the doubts, of others of whom he reads in books? Yet perhaps this weakness is more due to the American scene today than to the author. The book deserves study and use, above all in student groups who can give it their own application.

### *The Strangeness of the Church*

The same is true of Jenkins' *The Strangeness of the Church*. Except for the interest-catching title, it impresses the reader as a well-written, straightforward text-book on the nature of the Church, from a point of view best described as Reformed-and-therefore-thoroughly-ecumenical. The author's standpoint, except for a first chapter recommending the Church, is quite frankly within the Church, speaking to church people prepared to learn about the institution and movement of which they are already a part. This presupposed, however, Jenkins teaches clearly and forcefully. He affirms the historical continuity of the people of God: "The Old Covenant is not one of works but of grace. . . . The old Israel failed not through possessing an inadequate revelation of God, but through its disobedience and its attempt to have God on its own terms." He affirms the intimate interdependence of the risen Christ and the Church, correcting by the way most of the common aberrations in the Anglo-Saxon world: individual religion, the sentimental Jesus, the church as social club, and the like. He expounds in a fresh way for laymen the meaning of preaching and of the Sacraments, not raising any but the most obvious controversial issues. One senses in these chapters an ironic desire to unite both Protestant and Catholic values. A chapter on church order emphasizes the common life of the Christian community and diversity of ministries in it, rather than a sacramental historical continuity. The emphasis is here that of Jenkins' Congregationalism, yet open in principle to combination with other forms. And in the final chapters on unity and the future, the challenge is presented to the churches to lose their lives in the mission to which they are called; "activities are ecumenical only when they express a responsible concern for the wholeness of Christ's purpose in the world." This is good material for religious people. It speaks their language and will educate them to broader perspectives.

### *Doing the Truth*

But for a volume which catches the idiom and problems of the man in the street we must turn to Pike's work, ambitiously subtitled "a summary of Christian ethics". The book is a theological *mélange*

of the most remarkable sort. A well-nigh static picture of the ideal relations in the Trinity as a source and model for earthly life gives place in the next paragraph to God's historical purpose for His people. The image, borrowed from the world of Anglican Greek idealism, of a community of creative functions more or less reflecting the Kingdom of God on earth — "Genesis reminds us that God is reducing chaos to order. This too is our task" — is used when it makes the point. But Pike can turn with equal conviction to an uncompromising statement of salvation by grace alone leading to an ethic primarily of gratitude.

Yet this eclecticism is a help rather than a hindrance in the communication of the basic ethical insights the author wishes to expound. He engages the reader by a reasonable and idealistic statement of what man essentially is in the context of God's creation, redemption, and community. This provides the background then for presenting the totality of God's claim as the foundation of man's vocation, sin as the attempt to separate oneself from this claim, thus becoming separated from one's own true self, as well as one's neighbour and God; and justification as God's gracious acceptance of us again, which makes it possible for us to accept ourselves. The result is an ethic founded on the basic motive of gratitude for what God has done, expressed in a totally committed life in a creative vocation, which is at once self-fulfilment and service to the neighbour.

All of this does not differ fundamentally from Miller. But Pike's emphases are significantly different at several points. His approach is in the first place conversational, related to problems such as marriage relations, or business ethics, which the reader immediately recognizes as his own. The first discussion of these problems is on the basis of an idealistic reason which flatters the reader, and prepares him to accept the judgment on himself in terms of his essential self which then comes. This does not inhibit Pike in describing sin. It may even give him more freedom to point up specific sins as he does, and make them more relevant to the reader. Certainly the chapter on "Christianity, Democracy and Communism" minces no words about God's relation to "the American way of life". But behind this realism, somewhat oddly mixed with faith in God's active grace, lies a concept of sanctification which appeals to man's progress in becoming what he really was from the beginning.

This is based on another difference with Miller — Pike's strong emphasis on the Trinity as the pattern of God's eternal action in and with man, and of man's response to God, almost to the exclusion of eschatology. To be sure, he speaks of our citizenship in heaven, following Thomas and Augustine, in connection with political



questions. But the whole tenor of the book places the promise of the Gospel in that which can be realized by God the Trinity active in and through the community of Christians perpetually creating, redeeming, and sanctifying. This again is comforting to the American (or for that matter the British) reader, for it takes the edge off the New Testament's radical challenge to our attachments and loves in this world. But does it do justice to the radical ethics which Pike's book also contains ?

### *Hardness of Heart*

But these differences are perhaps overdrawn. Pike's thought on questions of Church and state, marriage and family, and economics, all show the marks of a thinker as thoroughly free from the bonds of natural law, despite the images borrowed from that world of thought which he uses, as is Miller. For a real theological dispute one must turn to Edmond Cherbonnier, who attacks the whole concept of justification by faith as presented in Luther and Calvin, on the grounds that faith and works are two sides of the same act. His thesis is that Augustine and Pelagius alike have misconceived human freedom and human sin: Pelagius because he fell into moralism, and Augustine because he called sin intrinsic to human nature, and thus denied human freedom and reduced Christianity to a mere disclosure of certain knowledge to be received by faith. The result of both tendencies, he maintains, is the same. Love of the neighbour is forgotten, and religion becomes self-centred, and no sound basis for good works can be built up at all. Cherbonnier illustrates copiously from Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, with sideswipes at St. Francis and Thomas à Kempis, the way in which, because of false doctrines of sin and justification, they all in spite of themselves became legalists about works, more preoccupied with becoming free of self than with serving their neighbour, separating the inward religious dimension from external action.

Over against this Cherbonnier places what he calls the "biblical" understanding of sin. This in his view defines sin as whatever is opposed to love. It recognizes the universality of sin without regarding it as congenital to human nature. It is a fact whose historical, social, and psychological dimensions we can analyze, to which man is bound when he commits himself to it. Release can only come from God's love which softens our hardened heart, centring our will not on our affirmation or denial of ourselves, but on Him and His will. At the same time faith and works go together, and react on each other. Salvation must mean transformation of the whole man by love.



It is hard to discover the basis for this carefully documented yet thoroughly biased attack on three of history's greatest theologians. It is the more difficult because Cherbonnier could only make his argument by leaving out the central point of Luther's theology — *sola gratia* — which puts a wholly different light on the nature of faith and works and their relation both to God's love and love of the neighbour. Yet it was Luther's central point which Cherbonnier was concerned to affirm in the name of the Bible. Certainly he was right to protest in the name of responsible freedom in the Bible against the more philosophical abstraction of Calvin's and Augustine's predestination. Yet his own reconstruction of the biblical concept of sin is a mixture of references to the Bible and to modern literature largely of a psychological turn. The author owes his readers, after such a massive attack as his, a solid exegesis of the biblical understanding of sin, which would take account of other phrases than "hardness of heart".

### *Man's Knowledge of God*

The most careful piece of creative scholarship among these books is Professor Wolf's *Man's Knowledge of God*. Wolf takes as his point of departure the growing and varied search for some kind of god to worship in post-war America, in order to illustrate the problematic character of religion as a general phenomenon. His basic argument is that a series of events on the plane of history is the locus of God's revelation, and that this revelation itself "is the particular activity of God, the unveiling of his hiddenness, his giving himself in communion". It is from this God, as we know Him in Christ, that we derive our ability also to recognize His hand in nature. It is from this revelation that we understand by faith the meaning and direction of all history. Revelation, therefore, must be self-authenticating. It is "the only meaningful way in which it can be discussed. The acceptance of the Christian revelation as a faith may not be an irrational act. It may be the only way of expressing a relationship in the field of knowing that when accepted is seen to disclose an ultimate rationality." At the same time this knowledge of God is not an extension of our knowledge when it comes, but rather the transformation of ourselves and our relations to others. It is the act of redemption.

This leaves Wolf with the problem of the relation of God's revelation in Christ to other revelations of God, which he describes with the formula "continuity and discontinuity". Christ is continuous and discontinuous with God's revelation in the Old Testament. But the same is true of "all religions and all cultural quests for

meaning". Even Christianity "as a religion possesses no innate superiority to other religions. It, like them, is subject to judgment by the final criterion of all religions — Jesus the Son of God".

A question arises here. Does not revelation have a double meaning, only one of which is covered by the early part of the book described above, if, as Wolf implies, there is some revelation of an ambiguous sort in all human religions and cultural striving? The question becomes more insistent when he deals with revelation and reason. Reason is defined as "simply the receptivity of the human mind to experience and the sorting out into patterns of meaning of the manifold of experience".

So defined, Wolf objects to treating it as a rival of faith, or a tool of discovery. On the other hand, he objects to theologies which he believes reject the right of reason to deal with biblical revelation like all other experience. For this use of reason is both inevitable, and apologetically helpful as "the transportation into a philosophic key of basic Christian experience". It is furthermore possible because Jesus Christ was the *logos* of God. "Human reason responsive to divine reason is able to see from the perspective of faith the utter 'naturalness' of God's revelation."

Here, surely, is confusion. Firstly, his definition will not do, for it is the whole human person, not merely his rational faculty, which sorts out patterns of meaning from the manifold of experience. Secondly, man's reason, because it is man's, is not so receptive as Wolf maintains. It sets up the categories in the framework of which it will receive experience, and often selects experiences to fit the categories. It is perhaps typical of American thinkers not to understand what an ideology is, and how the framework of man's thought can become a system which substitutes for God. But no-one who has argued with a communist could accept Wolf's dictum that "it is false to maintain, as some theologians seem to, that the structures of reason or its ability to think according to rational canons, have been destroyed as the result of the fall". Reason is more relative, more tyrannous, and less reliable than this. This is why "some theologians" have rejected philosophical criteria for the expression of their theology, which presented themselves in the name of reason, but were actually expressions of humanistic ideology. *Credo ut intellegam* is the purpose of such a procedure, even though one may doubt that God's revelation will ever appear so utterly natural as Professor Wolf hopes, as long as we live in this world by faith.

The book closes with a brief but thoughtful consideration of Christ and the world's religions which deserves mention. Wolf finds also in other religions some self-disclosure of God amid partial and



confused perspectives. Yet this need not lessen the unique claim of Christ or the missionary imperative, for God has revealed Himself in Christ personally in history for the fulfilment and correction of all religion. "Here in this general revelation in the religious life of mankind is a point of contact for the Gospel and the source of the evangelical call to repentance." Once again it must be asked whether the nature of a religious claim, as put by these other religions, is fully understood. It may be that the religious life of mankind is the barrier to revelation and not a form of it, and that the point of contact for the Christian may be some more earthly human experience or community in a new Christian land in which the hand of God may be seen.

Yet such criticisms as these are not directed to Professor Wolf's book *per se*, but rather to the creative ferment of American theology of which it is so excellent a statement. There remains the question: how far have all these volumes fulfilled their avowed purposes of relevance and challenge? In answer, three remarks.

1. The writers must recognize that, with the exception of Pike, they have communicated their thoughts more to their fellow intellectuals, or to the lay study groups in church or university who are already Christian, than to the outsider on the street. This, for the reader of this journal, will recommend them for fruitful study.

2. All of these books represent a strong movement towards dogmatics in America. They confess the faith. Yet this fresh dogmatics is not yet so refined as to dwell on differences or work out inconsistencies in itself. The frontier over against the liberal intellectual world is still far more evident in this writing, than interconfessional frontiers.

3. The reason why none of these books has the prophetic urgency of the writing of Niebuhr or the apostolic conviction of a new theological discovery does not lie, this writer would like to suggest, in the authors, but in the American scene itself. None of them has been seized, as Niebuhr was seized in the late twenties, by an insight into *the* basic problem and temptation which America faces today. They have touched on many problems, and deep ones — the state of family life, the realistic despair of our literature, the self-righteousness of our politics, and our growing rate of psychiatric disorders, to mention only a few — but it has been given to none of us to find the central point at which the Word of God must be spoken, or the underlying disorder which breeds the others. Until that time it is good that there be experiments both in theology and in ethical analysis which show that we are watching and searching in faith. Perhaps some reader from abroad will find the clue which we have missed.

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